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OF THE

LATE REVEREND THOMAS BOSTON
OF ETTRICK;

NOW FIRST COLLECTED, AND REPRINTED WITHOUT ABRIDGMENT;

INCLUDING

HIS MEMOIRS, WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

EDITED BY THE

REV. SAMUEL M'MILLAN.

VOL. VIII.

ABERDEEN:
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HUMAN NATURE

IN ITS

FOURFOLD STATE,

OF

PRIMITIVE INTEGRITY; ENTIRE DEPRAVITY;
BEGUN RECOVERY;
AND CONSUMMATE HAPPINESS OR MISERY:

AND

A VIEW OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE

FROM THE SACRED RECORDS.

BY THE

REV. THOMAS BOSTON,

OF ETTRICK.

ABERDEEN:
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MAN'S FOURFOLD STATE.

STATE I.

THE STATE OF INNOCENCE.

ECCLES. vii. 29,

Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

THERE are four things very necessary to be known by all that would see heaven: 1. What man *was* in the state of innocence, as God made him. 2. What he *is* in the state of corrupt nature, as he hath unmade himself. 3. What he *must be* in the state of grace, as created in Christ Jesus unto good works, if ever he be made a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. 4. What he *will be* in his eternal state, as made by the Judge of all, either perfectly happy, or completely miserable, and that for ever. These are weighty points, that touch the vitals of practical godliness, from which most men, and even many professors, in these dregs of time, are quite estranged. I design, therefore, under the divine conduct, to open these things, and apply them.

I begin with the first of them, namely, the *State of Innocence:* that beholding man polished after the similitude of a palace, the ruins may the more affect us; we may the more prize that matchless Person whom the Father has appointed the repairer of the breach; and that we may, with fixed resolves, betake ourselves to that way which leadeth to the city that hath immoveable foundations.

In the text we have three things:—

1. The state of innocence wherein man was created. "God hath made man upright." By "man" here we are to understand our first parents; the archetypal pair, the root of mankind, the com-

pendized world, and the fountain from whence all generations have streamed; as may appear by comparing Gen. v. 1, 2, "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him: male and female created he them; and blessed them," as the root of mankind, "and called their name Adam." The original word is the same in our text. In this sense, man was made right, (agreeable to the nature of God, whose work is perfect,) without any imperfection, corruption, or principle of corruption, in his body or soul. He was made "upright," that is, straight with the will and law of God, without any irregularity in his soul. By the set it got in its creation, it directly pointed towards God, as his chief end; which straight inclination was represented, as in an emblem, by the erect figure of his body, a figure that no other living creature partakes of. What David was in a gospel sense, that was he in a legal sense; one "according to God's own heart," altogether righteous, pure, and holy. God made him thus: he did not first make him, and then make him righteous; but in the very making of him, he made him righteous. Original righteousness was created with him; so that in the same moment he was a man, he was a righteous man, morally good; with the same breath that God breathed into him a living soul, he breathed into him a righteous soul.

2. Here is man's fallen state: "But they have sought out many inventions." They fell off from their rest in God, and fell upon seeking inventions of their own, to mend their case; and they quite marred it. Their ruin was from their own proper motion: they would not abide as God had made them; but they sought out inventions, to deform and undo themselves.

3. Observe here the certainty and importance of these things; "Lo, this only have I found," &c. Believe them, they are the result of a narrow search, and a serious inquiry, performed by the wisest of men. In the two preceding verses, Solomon represents himself as in quest of goodness in the world; but the issue of it was, he could find no satisfying end of his search after it; though it was not for want of pains, for he "counted one by one, to find out the account. Behold, this have I found, saith the preacher,—to wit, "That," as the same word is read in our text, "yet my soul seeketh, but I find not." He could make no satisfying discovery of it, which might stay his inquiry. He found the good very rare, one as it were among a thousand. But could that satisfy the grand query, "Where shall wisdom be found?" No it could not: and if the experience of others in this point, run counter to Solomon's, as it is no reflection on his discernment, it can as little decide the question, which will remain undetermined till the last day. But, amidst all

this uncertainty there is one point found out and fixed—"This have I found." You may depend upon it as a most certain truth, and be fully satisfied in it; "Lo this;" fix your eyes upon it, as a matter worthy of most deep and serious regard; namely, that man's nature is now depraved: but that depravity was not from God, for he "made man upright;" but from themselves, "they have sought out many inventions."

DOCTRINE—*God made man altogether righteous.*

This is that state of innocence in which God placed man in the world. It is described in the holy Scripture with a running pen, in comparison of the following states; for it was of no continuance, but passed away as a flying shadow, by man's abusing the freedom of his will. I shall,

I. Inquire into the righteousness of this state wherein man was created.
II. Lay before you some of the happy concomitants and consequences thereof.
III. Applying the whole.

I. Of Man's Original Righteousness.

As to the righteousness of this state, consider, that as uncreated righteousness, the righteousness of God is the supreme rule; so all created righteousness, whether of men or angels, has respect to a law as its rule, and is a conformity thereto. A creature can no more be morally independant of God in its actions and powers, than it can be naturally independent of him. A creature, as a creature, must acknowledge the Creator's will as its supreme law; for as it cannot exist without him, so it must not be but for him, and according to his will; yet no law obliges, until it is revealed. And hence it follows, that there was a law, which man, as a rational creature, was subjected to in his creation; and that this law was revealed to him.

"God made man upright," says the text. This supposes a law to which he was conformed in his creation; as when any thing is made regular, or according to rule, of necessity the rule itself is presupposed. Whence we may gather, that this law was no other than the eternal, indispensable law of righteousness, observed in all points by the second Adam, opposed by the carnal mind, and some notions of which remain yet among the Pagans, who, "having not the law, are a law unto themselves," Rom. ii. 14. In a word,

this law is the very same which was afterwards summed up in the ten commandments, and promulgated, on mount Sinai, to the Israelites, called by us the moral law, and man's righteousness consisted in conformity to this law or rule. More particularly, there is a twofold conformity required of a man; a conformity of the powers of his soul to the law, which you may call habitual righteousness; and a conformity of all his actions to it, which is actual righteousness. Now, God made man habitually righteous; man was to make himself actually righteous; the former was the stock which God put into his hand; the latter was the improvement he should have made of it. The sum of what I have said is, that the righteousness wherein man was created, was the conformity of all the faculties and powers of his soul to the moral law. This is what we call Original Righteousness, which man was originally endued with. We may take it up in these three things:—

1. Man's understanding was a lamp of light. He had perfect knowledge of the law, and of his duty accordingly: he was made after God's image, and consequently could not want knowledge, which is a part thereof, Col, iii. 10. "The new man is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him." And indeed this was necessary to fit him for universal obedience; seeing no obedience can be according to the law, unless it proceed from a sense of the commandment of God requiring it. It is true, Adam had not the law written upon tables of stone; but it was written upon his mind, the knowledge thereof being created with him. God impressed it upon his soul, and made him a law to himself, as the remains of it among the heathens do testify, Rom. ii. 14, 15. And seeing man was made to be the mouth of the creation, to glorify God in his works, we have ground to believe he had naturally an exquisite knowledge of the works of God. We have a proof of this in Adam's giving names to the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and those such as express their nature. "Whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof," Gen. ii. 19. The dominion which God gave him over the creatures, soberly to use and dispose of them according to his will, (still in subordination to the will of God,) seems to require no less than a knowledge of their natures. And, besides all this, his perfect knowledge of the law proves his knowledge in the management of civil affairs, which, in respect of the law of God, "a good man will guide with discretion," Psalm cxii. 5.

2. His will in all things was agreeable with the will of God, Eph. iv. 42. There was no corruption in his will, no inclination to evil; for that is sin, properly and truly so called: hence the

apostle says, Rom. vii. 7, "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." An inclination to evil is really a fountain of sin, and therefore inconsistent with that rectitude and uprightness which the text expressly says he was endued with at his creation. The will of man then was directed and naturally inclined to God and goodness, though mutable. It was disposed, by its original make, to follow the Creator's will, as the shadow does the body; and was not left in an equal balance to good and evil: for at that rate he had not been upright, nor habitually conformed to the law; which in no moment can allow the creature not to be inclined towards God as his chief end, any more than it can allow man to be a god to himself. The law was impressed upon Adam's soul: now this, according to the new covenant, by which the image of God is repaired, consists in two things:—1. Putting the law in the mind, denoting the knowlege of it; 2. Writing it in the heart, denoting inclinations in the will, answerable to the commands of the law, Heb. viii. 10. So that as the will, when we consider it as renewed by grace, is by that grace naturally inclined to the same holiness, in all its parts, which the law requires; so was the will of man, when we consider him as God made him at first, endued with natural inclinations to every thing commanded by the law. For if the regenerate are partakers of the divine nature, as undoubtedly, they are, for so says the Scripture, 2 Pet. i. 4; and if this divine nature can import no less than the inclination of the heart to holiness, then surely Adam's will could not want this inclination; for in him the image of God was perfect. It is true it is said, Rom. ii. 14, 15, "That the Gentiles show the work of the law written in their hearts;" but this denotes only their knowledge of that law, such as it is: but the apostle to the Hebrews, in the text cited, takes the word heart in another sense, distinguishing it plainly from the mind. And it must be granted, that, when God promises, in the new covenant, "to write his law in the hearts of his people," it imports quite another thing than what heathens have: for though they have notions of it in their minds, yet their hearts go another way; their will has got a set and bias quite contrary to that law; therefore the expression suitable to the present purpose must needs import, besides these notions of the mind, inclinations of the will going along therewith; which inclinations, though mixed with corruption in the regenerate, were pure and unmixed in upright Adam. In a word, as Adam knew his Master's pleasure in the matter of duty, so his will inclined to what he knew.

3. His affections were orderly, pure, and holy; which is a neces-

sary part of that uprightness wherein man was created. The apostle has a petition, 2 Thess. iii. 5, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God;" that is, "The Lord straighten your hearts," or make them lie straight to the love of God: and our text tells us that man was made straight. "The new man is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 24. Now this holiness, as it is distinguished from righteousness, may import the purity and good order of the affections. Thus the apostle, 1 Tim. ii. 8, will have men to "pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting:" because, as troubled water is unfit to receive the image of the sun so the heart filled with impure and disorderly affections is not fit for divine communications. Man's sensitive appetite was indeed naturally carried out towards objects grateful to the senses. For seeing man was made up of body and soul, and God made man to glorify and enjoy him, and for this end to use his good creatures in subordination to himself; it is plain that man was naturally inclined both to spiritual and sensible good; yet to spiritual good, the chief good as his ultimate end. Therefore his sensitive motions and inclinations were subordinate to his reason and will, which lay straight with the will of God, and were not in the least contrary to the same. Otherwise he would have been made up of contradictions; his soul being naturally inclined to God, as the chief end, in the superior part thereof; and the same soul inclined to the creature, as the chief end, in the inferior part thereof, as they call it; which is impossible: for man, at the same instant, cannot have two chief ends. Man's affections, then, in his primitive state, were pure from all defilement, free from all disorder and distemper, because in all their motions they were duly subjected to his clear reason, and his holy will. He had also an executive power answerable to his will; a power to do the good which he knew should be done, and which he was inclined to do, even to fulfil the whole law of God. If it had not been so, God would have required of him perfect obedience; for to say that "the Lord gathereth where he hath not strawed," is but the blasphemy of a wicked heart against so good and bountiful a God, Matt. xxv. 24—26.

From what has been said, it may be gathered, that the original righteousness explained was universal and natural, yet mutable.

1. It was universal, both with respect to the subject of it, the whole man, and the object of it, the whole law. Universal, I say, with respect to the subject of it; for this righteousness was diffused through the whole man: it was a blessed leaven, that leavened the whole lump. There was not a wrong pin in the tabernacle of human nature, when God set it up, however shattered it is now. Man was

then holy in soul, body, and spirit; while the soul remained untainted, its lodging was kept clean and undefiled; the members of the body were consecrated vessels, and instruments of righteousness. A combat between flesh and spirit, reason and appetite, nay, the least inclination to sin, or lust of the flesh in the inferior part of the soul, was utterly inconsistent with this uprightness in which man was created; and has been invented to veil the corruption of man's nature, and to obscure the grace of God in Jesus Christ; it looks very much like the language of fallen Adam, laying his own sin at his Maker's door, Gen. iii. 12, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." But as this righteousness was universal in respect of the subject, because it spread through the whole man; so also it was universal in respect of the object, the holy law. There was nothing in the law but what was agreeable to his reason and will, as God made him, though sin hath now set him at odds with it; his soul was shapen out in length and breadth to the commandment, though exceeding broad; so that his original righteousness was not only perfect in its parts, but in degrees.

2. As it was universal, so it was natural to him, and not supernatural in that state. Not that it was essential to man, as man, for then he could not have lost it, without the loss of his very being, but it was natural to him; he was created with it, and it was necessary to the perfection of man, as he came out of the hand of God, necessary to his being placed in a state of integrity. Yet,

3. It was mutable; it was a righteousness that might be lost, as is manifested by the doleful event. His will was not absolutely indifferent to good and evil; God set it towards good only, yet he did not so fix and confirm its inclinations, that it could not alter. No, it was moveable to evil, and that only by man himself, God having given him a sufficient power to stand in this integrity, if he had pleased. Let no man quarrel with God's works in this; for if Adam had been unchangeably righteous, he must have been so either by nature or by free gift: by nature he could not be so, for that is proper to God, and incommunicable to any creature; if by free gift, then no wrong was done to him in withholding what he could not crave. Confirmation in a righteous state is a reward of grace, given upon continuing righteous through the state of trial, and would have been given to Adam if he had stood out the time appointed for probation by the Creator; and accordingly is given to the saints upon account of the merits of Christ, who "was obedient even unto death." And herein believers have the advantage of Adam, that they can never totally nor finally fall away from grace.

Thus was man made originally righteous, being created in "God's own image," Gen. i. 27, which consists in the positive qualities of "knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness," Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24. "All that God made was very good, according to their several natures," Gen. i. 31. And so was man morally good, being made after the image of him who is "good and upright," Psalm xxv. 8. Without this, he could not have answered the great end of his creation, which was, to know, love, and serve his God, according to his will; nay, he could not be created otherwise, for he must either be conformed to the law in his powers, principles, and inclinations, or not: if he was, then he was righteous; and, if not, he was a sinner; which is absurd and horrible to imagine.

II. I shall lay before you some of those things which accompanied or flowed from the righteousness of man's primitive state. Happiness is the result of holiness; and as this was a holy, so it was a happy state.

1. Man was then a very glorious creature. We have reason to suppose, that as Moses' face shone when he came down from the mount, so man had a very lightsome and pleasant countenance, and beautiful body, while as yet there was no darkness of sin in him at all. But seeing God himself is "glorious in holiness," Exod. xv. 11, surely that spiritual comeliness which the Lord put upon man at his creation, made him a very glorious creature. O how did light shine in his holy conversation, to the glory of the Creator! while every action was but the darting forth of a ray and beam of that glorious unmixed light which God had set up in his soul, while that lamp of love, lighted from heaven, continued burning in his heart, as in the holy place; and the law of the Lord, put in his inward parts by the finger of God, was kept by him there, as in the most holy. There was no impurity to be seen without; no squint look in the eyes, after any unclean thing; the tongue spoke nothing but the language of heaven; and, in a word, "the King's son was all glorious within," and his "clothing of wrought gold."

2. He was the favourite of Heaven. He shone brightly in the image of God, who cannot but love his own image, wherever it appears. While he was alone in the world, he was not alone, for God was with him. His communion and fellowship were with his Creator, and that immediately; for as yet there was nothing to turn away the face of God from the work of his own hands, seeing sin had not as yet entered, which alone could make the breach.

By the favour of God he was advanced to be confederate with heaven in the first covenant, called the covenant of works. God

reduced the law, which he gave in his creation, into the form of a covenant, whereof perfect obedience was the condition: life was the thing promised, and death the penalty. As for the condition, one great branch of the natural law was, that man should believe whatsoever God revealed, and should do whatsoever he commanded; accordingly, God making this covenant with man, extended his duty to the "not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil;" and the law thus extended, was the rule of man's covenant obedience. How easy were these terms to him who had the natural law written on his heart; and that inclining him to obey this positive law revealed to him, it seems, by an audible voice, Gen. ii. 16, 17, the matter whereof was so very easy! And indeed it was highly reasonable that the rule and matter of his covenant obedience should be thus extended, that which was added being a thing in itself indifferent, where his obedience was to turn upon the precise point of the will of God, the plainest evidence of true obedience; and it being in an external thing, wherein his obedience or disobedience would be most clear and conspicuous.

Now, upon this condition, God promised him life, the continuance of natural life, in the union of soul and body, and of spiritual life, in the favour of his Creator: he promised him also eternal life in heaven, to have been entered into when he should have passed the time of his trial upon earth, and the Lord should see meet to transport him into the upper paradise. This promise of life was included in the threatening of death, mentioned, Gen. ii. 17. For while God says, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" it is, in effect, "If thou do not eat of it, thou shalt surely live." And this was sacramentally confirmed by another tree in the garden, called therefore, "The Tree of Life," which he was debarred from when he had sinned; Gen. iii. 22, 23, "Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever; therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden." Yet it is not to be thought that man's life and death did hang only on this matter of the forbidden fruit, but on the whole law; for so says the apostle, Gal. iii. 10, "It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." That of the forbidden fruit was a revealed part of Adam's religion, and so was necessary expressly to be laid before him; but as to the natural law, he naturally knew death to be the wages of disobedience, for the very heathens were not ignorant of this, "knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death," Rom. i. 32. Moreover, the promise included in the threatening, secured Adam's life,

according to the covenant, as long as he obeyed the natural law, with the addition of that positive command; so that he needed nothing to be expressed to him in the covenant but what concerned the eating of the forbidden fruit. That eternal life in heaven was promised in this covenant, is plain from this, that the threatening was of eternal death in hell, to which, when man had made himself liable, Christ was promised, by his death to purchase eternal life. And Christ himself expounds the promise of the covenant of works, of eternal life, while he proposes the condition of that covenant to a proud young man, who, though he had not Adam's stock, yet would needs enter into life in the way of working, as Adam was to have done under this covenant, Matt. xix. 17, "If thou wilt enter into life," (namely, eternal life, by doing, ver. 16,) "keep the commandments."

The penalty was death, Gen. ii. 17, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The death threatened was such as the life promised was, and that most justly; namely, temporal, spiritual, and eternal death. The event is a commentary on this; for that very day he did eat thereof he was a dead man in law, but the execution was stopped because of his posterity, then in his loins, and another covenant was prepared: however, that day his body got its death-wound, and became mortal. Death also seized his soul; he lost his original righteousness, and the favour of God; witness the pangs of conscience which made him hide himself from God. And he became liable to eternal death, which would have actually followed of course, if the Mediator had not been provided, who found him bound with the cords of death, as a malefactor ready to be led to execution. Thus you have a short description of the covenant into which the Lord brought man in the state of innocence.

And does it seem a small thing unto you, that earth was thus confederate with heaven? This could have been done to none but him whom the King of Heaven delighted to honour. It was an act of grace, worthy of the gracious God whose favourite he was; for there was grace and free favour in the first covenant, though the exceeding riches of grace, as the apostle calls it, Eph. ii. 7, were reserved for the second. It was certainly an act of grace, favour, and admirable condescension in God, to enter into a covenant, and such a covenant, with his own creature. Man was not at his own, but at God's disposal, nor had he any thing to work with but what he had received from God. There was no proportion between the work and the promised reward. Before that covenant, man was bound to perfect obedience, in virtue of his natural dependence on God;

and death was naturally the wages of sin, which the justice of God could and would have required, though there had never been any covenant between God and man: but God was free; man could never have required eternal life as the reward of his work, if there had not been such a covenant. God was free to have disposed of his creatures as he saw meet: if he had stood in his integrity to the end of time, and there had been no covenant promising eternal life to him upon his obedience, God might have withdrawn his supporting hand at last and so have made him creep back into nothing, whence almighty power had drawn him forth. And, what wrong could have been in this, for God would have only taken back what he freely gave? But now, the covenant being made, God becomes debtor to his own faithfulness: if man will work, he may crave the reward on the ground of the covenant. Well might the angels, then, upon his being raised to this dignity, have given him this salutation—"Hail! thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee."

3. God made him Lord of the world, prince of the inferior creatures, universal Lord and emperor of the whole earth. His creator gave him dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, over all the earth, yea, and every living thing that moveth on the earth; he "put all things under his feet," Psalm viii. 6—8. He gave him a power, soberly to use and dispose of the creatures in the earth, sea, and air. Thus man was God's deputy governor in the lower world, and this his dominion was an image of God's severeignty. This was common to the man and to the woman: but the man had one thing peculiar to him, namely, that he had dominion over the woman also, 1 Cor. xi. 7. Behold how the creatures came unto him, to own their subjection, and to do him homage as their lord, and quietly stood before him till he put names on them as his own, Gen. ii. 19. Man's face struck an awe upon them; the stoutest creatures stood astonished, tamely and quietly owning him as their lord and ruler. Thus was man "crowned with glory and honour," Psalm viii. 5. The Lord dealt most liberally and bountifully with him "put all things under his feet;" only he kept one thing, one tree in the garden, out of his hands, even the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

But you may say, and did he grudge him this? I answer, Nay; but when he had made him thus holy and happy, he graciously gave him this restriction, which was in its own nature a prop and stay to keep him from falling. And this I say upon these three grounds: —1. As it was most proper for the honour of God, who had made man lord of the lower world, to assert his sovereign dominion over

all, by some particular visible sign; so it was most proper for man's safety. Man being set down in a beautiful paradise, it was an act of infinite wisdom, and of grace too, to keep him from one single tree, as a visible testimony that he must hold all of his Creator, as his great landlord; that so, while he saw himself lord of the creatures, he might not forget that he was still God's subject. 2. This was a memorial of his mutable state given to him from heaven, to be laid up by him for his greater caution. For man was created with a free will to good, which the tree of life was an evidence of: but his will was also free to evil, and the forbidden tree was to him a memorial thereof. It was, in a manner a continual watchword to him against evil, a bacon set up before him, to bid him beware of dashing himself to pieces on the rock of sin. 3. God made man upright, directed towards God as his chief end. He set him, like Moses, on the top of the hill, holding up his hands to heaven: and as Aaron and Hur stayed up Moses' hands, Exodus xvii. 10—12, so God gave man an erect figure of body, and forbade him the eating of this tree to keep him in that posture of uprightness wherein he was created. God made the beasts looking down towards the earth, to shew that their satisfaction might be brought from thence; and accordingly it does afford them what is suited to their appetite: but the erect figure of man's body, which looketh upward, shewed him that his happiness lay above him, in God: and that he was to expect it from heaven, and not from earth. Now this fair tree, of which he was forbidden to eat, taught him the same lesson; that his happiness lay not in enjoyment of the creatures, for there was a want even in paradise: so that the forbidden tree was, in effect the hand of all the creatures, pointing man away from themselves to God for happiness. It was a sign of emptiness hung before the door of the creation, with the inscription, "This is not your rest."

4. As he had a perfect tranquillity within his own breast, so he had a perfect calm without. His heart had nothing to reproach him with; conscience then had nothing to do, but to direct, approve, and feast him: and without, there was nothing to annoy him. The happy pair lived in perfect amity; and though their knowledge was vast, true, and clear, they knew no shame. Though they were naked, there were no blushes in their faces; for sin, the seed of shame, was not yet sown, Gen. ii. 25. And their beautiful bodies were not capable of injuries from the air: so they had no need of clothes, which are originally the badges of our shame. They were liable to no diseases nor pains: and, though they were not to live idle, yet toil, weariness, and sweat of the brows, were not known in this state.

5. Man had a life of pure delight, and unalloyed pleasure, in this state. Rivers of pure pleasure ran through it. The earth, with the product thereof, was now in its glory; nothing had yet come in to mar the beauty of the creatures. God placed him, not in a common place of the earth; but in Eden, a place eminent for pleasantness, as the name of it imports; nay, not only in Eden, but in the garden of Eden; the most pleasant spot of that pleasant place; a garden planted by God himself, to be the mansion-house of this his favourite. When God made the other living creatures, he said, "Let the water bring forth the moving creature," Gen. i. 29, and, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature," verse 24. But when man was to be made, he said; "Let us make man," verse 18. So, when the rest of the earth was to be furnished with herbs and trees, God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, and the fruit-tree," &c. verse 11. But of paradise it is said, "God planted it." Gen. ii. 8, which cannot but denote a singular excellence in that garden, beyond all other parts of the then beautiful earth. He was provided with every thing necessary and delightful; for there was "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food," verse 9. He knew not those delights which luxury has invented for the gratification of lust: but his delights were such as came out of the hand of God; without passing through sinful hands, which always leave marks of impurity on what they touch. So his delights were pure, his pleasures refined. Yet may I show you a more excellent way: wisdom had entered into his heart; surely then knowledge was pleasant unto his soul. What delight do some find in their discoveries of the works of nature, by those scraps of knowledge they have gathered! but how much more exquisite pleasure had Adam, while his piercing eyes read the book of God's works, which God laid before him, to the end he might glorify him in the same; and therefore had certainly fitted him for the work! But, above all, his knowledge of God, and that as his God, and the communion which he had with him, could not but afford him the most refined and exquisite pleasure in the innermost recesses of his heart. Great is that delight which the saints find in those views of the glory of God, which their souls are sometimes let into, while they are compassed about with many infirmities: and much may well be allowed to sinless Adam; who no doubt had a peculiar relish of those pleasures.

6. He was immortal. He would never have died if he had not sinned; it was in case of sin that death was threatened, Gen. ii. 17, which shews it to be the consequence of sin, and not of the sinless human nature. The perfect constitution of his body, which

came out of God's hand very good, and the righteousness and holiness of his soul, removed all inward causes of death; nothing being prepared for the grave's devouring mouth, but the vile body, Phil. iii. 21, and those who have sinned, Job xxiv. 19. And God's special care of his innocent creature, secured him against outward violence. The apostle's testimony is express, Rom. v. 12, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." Behold the door by which death came in! Satan wrought with his lies till he got it opened, and so death entered; therefore is he said to have been "a murderer from the beginning," John viii. 44.

Thus have I shown you the holiness and happiness of men in this state. If any should say, What is all this to us, who never tasted of that holy and happy state?—they must know, it nearly concerns us, as Adam was the root of all mankind, our common head and representative; who received from God our inheritance and stock, to keep it for himself and his children, and to convey it to them. The Lord put all mankind's stock, as it were, in one ship; and, as we ourselves would have done, he made our common father the pilot. He put a blessing in the root, to have been, if rightly managed diffused into all the branches. According to our text, making Adam upright, he made man upright; and all mankind had that uprightness in him; for, "if the root be holy, so are the branches." But more of this afterwards. Had Adam stood, none would have quarrelled with the representation.

III. The Doctrine of the State of Innocence applied.

Use I. For information. This shews us, 1. That not God, but man himself was the cause of his ruin. God made him upright; his Creator set him up, but he threw himself down. Was the Lord's directing and inclining him to good, the reason of his woful choice? or did heaven deal so sparingly with him, that his pressing wants sent him to hell to seek supply? Nay, man was, and is, the cause of his own ruin. 2. God may most justly require of men perfect obedience to his law, and condemn them for their not obeying it perfectly, though now they have no ability to keep it. In so doing, he gathers but where he has sown. He gave man ability to keep the whole law; man has lost it by his own fault; but his sin could never take away that right which God hath to exact perfect obedience of his creature, and to punish in case of disobedience. 3. Behold here the infinite obligation we lie under to Jesus Christ the second Adam, who, with his own precious blood has bought our freedom, and freely makes offer of it again to us, Hos. xiii. 9, and that with the advantage of everlasting security, and that it can

never be altogether lost any more, John x. 28, 29. Free grace will fix those, whom free will shook down into the gulph of misery.

Use II. This conveys a reproof to three sorts of persons: 1. To those who hate religion in the power of it, wherever it appears; and can take pleasure in nothing but in the world and in their lusts. Surely such men are far from righteousness: they are haters of God, Rom. i. 30, for they are haters of his image. Upright Adam in paradise would have been a great eyesore to all such persons; as he was to the serpent, whose seed they prove themselves to be, by their malignity. 2. It reproves those who put religion to shame, and those who are ashamed of religion, before a graceless world. There is a generation, who make so bold with the God who made them, and can in a moment crush them, that they ridicule piety, and make a mock of seriousness. "Against whom do you sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue?" Isaiah lvii. 4. Is it not against God himself, whose image, in some measure restored to some of his creatures, makes them fools in your eyes? But, "be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong," Isa. xxviii. 22. Holiness was the glory which God put on man when he made him; but now the sons of men turn that glory into shame, because they themselves glory in their shame. There are others that secretly approve of religion, and in religious company will profess it, who, at other times, to be neighbour-like, are ashamed to own it; so weak are they, that they are blown over with the wind of the wicked's mouth. A broad laughter, an impious jest, a scoffing jeer, out of a profane mouth, is to many an unanswerable argument against religion and seriousness; for, in the cause of religion, they are as silly doves without heart. O that such would consider that weighty sentence, "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels," Mark viii. 38. 3. It reproves the proud self-conceited professor, who admires himself in a garment of rags which he has patched together. There are many who, when once they have gathered some scraps of knowledge of religion, and have attained to some reformation of life, swell big with conceit of themselves; a sad sign that the effects of the fall lie so heavy upon them that they have not as yet come to themselves, Luke xv. 17. They have eyes behind, to see their attainments; but no eyes within, no eyes before, to see their wants, which would surely humble them: for true knowledge makes men to see, both what once they were, and what they are at present; and so is humbling, and

will not suffer them to be content with any measure of grace attained; but inclines them to press forward, "forgetting the things that are behind," Phil. iii. 13. But those men are such a spectacle of commiseration, as one would be who had set his palace on fire, and was glorying in a cottage which he had built for himself out of the rubbish, though so very weak, that it could not stand against a storm.

Use III. Of lamentation. Here was a stately building; man carved like a fair palace, but now lying in ashes: let us stand and look on the ruins, and drop a tear. This is a lamentation, and shall be for lamentation. Could we avoid weeping, if we saw our country ruined, and turned by the enemy into a wilderness? if we saw our houses on fire, and our property perishing in the flames? But all this comes far short of the dismal sight; Man fallen as a star from heaven; Ah, may we not now say, "O that we were as in months past!" when there was no stain in our nature, no cloud on our minds, no pollution in our hearts! Had we never been in better case, the matter had been less; but they that were brought up in scarlet, do now embrace dunghills. Where is our primitive glory now? once no darkness in the mind, no rebellion in the will no disorder in the affections. But ah! "How is the faithful city become an harlot!—Righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Our silver is become dross, our wine mixed with water." That heart which was once the temple of God, is now turned into a den of thieves. Let our name be Ichabod, for the glory is departed. Happy wast thou, O man! who was like unto thee? no pain nor sickness could affect thee, no death could approach thee, no sigh was heard from thee, till these bitter fruits were plucked from the forbidden tree. Heaven shone upon thee, and earth smiled: thou wast the companion of angels, and the envy of devils. But how low is he now laid, who was created for dominion, and made lord of the world! "The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us that we have sinned." The creatures that waited to do him service, are now, since the fall, set in battle-array against him, and the least of them, having commission, proves too hard for him. Waters overflow the old world; fire consumes Sodom; the stars in their courses fight against Sisera; frogs, flies, lice, &c. become executioners to Pharaoh and his Egyptians; worms eat up Herod: yea, man needs a league with the beasts; yea, with the very stones of the field, Job v. 23, having reason to fear, that every one who findeth him will slay him. Alas! how are we fallen! how are we plunged into a gulf of misery! The sun has gone down on us, death has come in at our windows; our enemies have put out our two eyes, and sport themselves with

our miseries. Let us then lie down in the dust, let shame and confusion cover us. Nevertheless, there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Come then, O sinner, look to Jesus Christ, the second Adam: quit the first Adam and his covenant; come over to the Mediator and Surety of the new and better covenant; and let your hearts say, "Be thou our ruler, and let this breach be under thy hand." Let your "eye trickle down, and cease not, without any intermission, till the Lord look down, and behold from heaven," Lam. iii. 49, 50.

STATE II.

THE STATE OF NATURE.

PART I.

THE SINFULNESS OF MAN'S NATURAL STATE.

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.—GEN. vi. 5.

WE have seen what man was, as God made him; a lovely and happy creature: let us view him now as he hath unmade himself; and we shall see him a sinful and a miserable creature. This is the sad state we are brought into by the fall; a state as black and doleful, as the former was glorious; and this we commonly call "The State of Nature;" or "Man's Natural State;" according to that of the apostle, Eph. ii. 3, "And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."—And herein two things are to be considered: 1. The *sinfulness;* 2. The *misery* of this state, in which all the unregenerate live. I begin with the *sinfulness* of man's natural state, whereof the text gives us a full, though short account: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great," &c.

The scope and design of these words are, to clear God's justice in bringing the flood on the old world.—There are two particular causes taken notice of in the preceding verses: 1. Mixed marriages, verse 2, "The sons of God," the posterity of Seth and Enos, professors of the true religion, married with "the daughters of men," the profane, cursed race of Cain. They did not carry the matter before the Lord, that he might choose for them, Psalm xlviii. 14, but without any respect to the will of God, they chose, not according to the rules of their faith, but of their fancy; they "saw that they were fair;" and their marriage with them occasioned their divorce from God. This was one of the causes of the deluge, which swept away the old world. Would to God that all professors in our day could plead not guilty; but though that sin brought on the deluge, yet the de-

luge hath not swept away that sin; which as of old, so in our day, may justly be looked upon as one of the causes of the decay of religion. It was an ordinary thing among the Pagans, to change their gods, as they changed their condition into a married lot: many sad instances the Christian world affords of the same; as if people were of Pharaoh's opinion, That religion is only for those who have no other care upon their heads, Exodus v. 17. 2. Great oppression, verse 4, "There were giants in the earth in those days;" men of great stature, great strength, and monstrous wickedness, "filling the earth with violence," verse 11. But neither their strength, nor treasures of wickedness, could profit them in the day of wrath. Yet the gain of oppression still causes many to forget the terror of this dreadful example. Thus much for the connexion, and what particular crimes that generation was guilty of. But every person that was swept away by the flood could not be guilty of these things; and "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Therefore, in my text, there is a general indictment drawn up against them all, "The wickedness of man was great in the earth," &c. and clearly proved, for God saw it. Two things are here laid to their charge:

1. Corruption of life, *wickedness, great wickedness.* I understand this of the wickedness of their lives; for it is plainly distinguished from the wickedness of their hearts. The sins of their outward conversation were great in the nature of them, and greatly aggravated by their attendant circumstances: and this not only among those of the race of cursed Cain, but those of holy Seth; the wickedness of man was great. And then it is added, "in the earth:" 1. To vindicate God's severity, in that he not only cut off sinners, but defaced the beauty of the earth, and swept off the brute creatures from it, by the deluge; that as men had set the marks of their impiety, God might set the marks of his indignation, on the earth. 2. To shew the heinousness of their sin, in making the earth, which God had so adorned for the use of man, a sink of sin, and a stage whereon to act their wickedness, in defiance of Heaven. God saw this corruption of life: he not only knew it, and took notice of it, but he made them to know that he took notice of it, and that he had not forsaken the earth, though they had forsaken heaven.

2. Corruption of nature: *Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* All their wicked practices are here traced to the fountain and spring-head: a corrupt heart was the source of all. The soul, which was made upright in all its faculties, is now wholly disordered. The heart, that was made according to God's own heart, is now the reverse of it, a forge of evil imagina-

tions, a sink of inordinate affections, and a storehouse of all impiety, Mark vii. 21, 22. Behold the heart of the natural man, as it is opened in our text. The mind is defiled; the thoughts of the heart are evil; the will and affections are defiled: the imagination of the thoughts of the heart, that is, whatsoever the heart frameth within itself by thinking, such as judgment, choice, purposes, devices, desires, every inward motion, or rather the frame of the thoughts of the heart, namely the frame, make, or mould of these, 1 Chron. xxix. 18, is evil. Yea, and every imagination, every frame of his thoughts, is so. The heart is ever framing something; but never one right thing: the frame of thoughts, in the heart of man, is exceedingly various; yet are they never cast into a right frame. But is there not, at least, a mixture of good in them? No, they are only evil; there is nothing in them truly good and acceptable to God: nor can any thing be so, that comes out of that forge; where, not the Spirit of God, but "the prince of the power of the air, worketh," Eph. ii. 2. Whatever changes may be found in them, are only from evil to evil; for the imagination of the heart, or frame of thoughts in natural men, is evil continually, or every day. From the first day to the last day, in this state, they are in midnight darkness; there is not the glimmering of the light of holiness in them; not one holy thought can ever be produced by the unholy heart. O what a vile heart is this! O what a corrupt nature is this! The tree that always brings forth fruit, but never good fruit, whatever soil it be set in, whatever pains be taken with it, must naturally be an evil tree: and what can that heart be, whereof every imagination, every set of thoughts, is only evil, and that continually? Surely that corruption is ingrained in our hearts, interwoven with our very natures, has sunk deep into our souls, and will never be cured but by a miracle of grace. Now such is man's heart, such is his nature, till regenerating grace change it. God that searcheth the heart saw man's heart was so, he took special notice of it: and the faithful and true Witness cannot mistake our case; though we are most apt to mistake ourselves in this point, and generally overlook it.

Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart saying, What is that to us? Let that generation of whom the text speaks, see to that. For the Lord has left the case of that generation on record, to be a looking-glass to all after generations, wherein they may see their own corruption of heart, and what their lives would be too, if he restrained them not: for "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man," Prov. xxvii. 19. Adam's fall has framed all men's hearts alike in this matter. Hence the

apostle, Rom. iii. 10—18, proves the corruption of the nature, hearts, and lives of all men, from what the psalmist says of the wicked in his day, Psalm xiv. 1—3; Psalm. v. 9; Psalm cxl. 3; Psalm x. 7; Psalm xxxvi. 1; and from what Jeremiah saith of the wicked in his day, Jer. ix. 3, and from what Isaiah says of those that lived in his time, Isa. lvii. 7, 8, and concludes, verse 19, "Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." Had the history of the the deluge been transmitted unto us, without the reason thereof in the text, we might thence have gathered the corruption and total depravity of man's nature: for what other quarrel could the holy and just God have with the infants that were destroyed by the flood, seeing they had no actual sin? If we saw a wise man, who having made a curious piece of work, and heartily approved of it when he gave it out of his hand, as fit for the use it was designed for, rise up in wrath and break it all in pieces, when he looked on it afterwards; should we not thence conclude that the frame of it had been quite marred since it came out of his hand, and that it does not serve for the use it was at first designed for? How much more, when we see the holy and wise God destroying the work of his own hands, once solemnly pronounced by him very good, may we not conclude that the original frame thereof is utterly marred, that it cannot be mended, but must needs be new made, or lost altogether? Gen. vi. 6, 7, "And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart; and the Lord said, I will destroy man," or blot him out; as a man doth a sentence out of a book, that cannot be corrected by cutting off some letters, syllables, or words, and interlining others here and there, but must needs be wholly new framed. But did the deluge carry off this coruption of man's nature? did it mend the matter? No, it did not. God, in his holy providence, "that every mouth may be stopped, and all the new "world may become guilty before God," as well as the old, permits that corruption of nature to break out in Noah, the father of the new world, after the deluge was over. Behold him, as another Adam, sinning in the fruit of a tree, Gen. ix. 20, 21, "He planted a vineyard, and he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent." More than that, God gives the same reason against a new deluge, which he gives in our text for bringing that on the old world: "I will not," saith he, "again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," Gen. viii. 21. Whereby it is intimated, that there is no mending of the matter by this means;

and that if he should always take the same course with men that he had done, he would be always sending deluges on the earth, seeing the corruption of man's nature still remains. But though the flood could not carry off the corruption of nature, yet it pointed at the way how it is to be done; to wit, that men must be "born of water and of the Spirit," raised from spiritual death in sin by the grace of Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood; out of which a new world of saints arise in regeneration, even as the new world of sinners out of the waters, where they had long lain buried, as it were, in the ark. This we learn from 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21, where the apostle, speaking of Noah's ark, saith, "Wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." Now the waters of the deluge being a like figure to baptism, it plainly follows, that they signified as baptism doth "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." To conclude then, those waters, though now dried up, may serve us still for a looking-glass, in which we may see the total corruption of our nature, and the necessity of regeneration.

From the text, thus explained, this weighty point of doctrine arises, which he that runs may read in it, namely, Man's nature is now wholly corrupted. There is a sad alteration, a wonderful overturning in the nature of man: where, at first, there was nothing evil, now there is nothing good.—In treating on this doctrine, I shall,

I. Confirm it.

II. Represent this corruption of nature in its several parts.

III. Shew you how man's nature comes to be thus corrupted.

IV. Apply this doctrine.

I. I shall confirm the doctrine of the corruption of nature.

I shall hold the glass to your eyes, wherein you may see your sinful nature; which, though God takes particular notice of it, many quite overlook. Here we shall consult the word of God, and men's experience and observation.

For scripture-proof, let us consider,

1. How the scripture takes particular notice of fallen Adam's communicating his image to his posterity, Gen. v. 3, "Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth." Compare with this the first verse of that chapter, "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him." Behold here, how the image after which man was made, and the image after which he is begotten, are opposed. Man was created in the likeness of God; that is, the holy and righteous God made a holy and righteous creature; but fallen Adam begat a son, not in

the likeness of God, but in his own likeness; that is, corrupt sinful Adam begat a corrnpt sinful son. For as the image of God bore righteousness and immortality in it, as was shewn before; so this image of fallen Adam bore corruption and death in it, 1 Cor. xv. 49, 50, compare verse 22. Moses, in that fifth chapter of Genesis, giving us the first bill of mortality that ever was in the world, ushers it in with this, that dying Adam begat mortals. Having sinned, he became mortal, according to the threatening; and so he begat a son in his own likeness, sinful, and therefore mortal. Thus sin and death passed on all. Doubtless he begat both Cain and Abel in his own likeness, as well as Seth. But it is not recorded of Abel; because he left no issue behind him, and his falling the first sacrifice to death in the world, was a sufficient document of it: nor of Cain, to whom it might have been thought peculiar, because of his monstrous wickedness; and besides, his posterity was drowned in the flood: but it is recorded of Seth, because he was the father of the holy seed; and from him all mankind since the flood have descended, and fallen Adam's own likeness with them.

2. It appears from that text of Scripture, Job xiv. 4, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Our first parents were unclean, how then can we be clean? How could our immediate parents be clean? how can our children be so? The uncleanness here referred to, is a sinful uncleanness; for it is such as makes man's days full of trouble: and it is natural, being derived from unclean parents: "Man is born of a woman," ver. 1, "And how can he be clean, that is born of a woman?" Job xxv. 4. The omnipotent God, whose power is not here challenged, could bring a clean thing out of an unclean, and so did in the case of the man Christ: but no other being can. Every person that is born according to the course of nature is born unclean. If the root be corrupt, so must the branches be. Neither is the matter mended, though the parents be sanctified ones; for they are but holy in part, and that by grace, not by nature! and they beget their children as men, not as holy men. Wherefore as the circumcised parent begets an uncircumcised child, and after the purest grain is sown, we reap chaff with the corn; so the holiest parent begets unholy children, and cannot communicate their grace to them, as they do their nature; which many godly parents find true, in their sad experience.

3. Consider the confession of the psalmist David, Psalm. li. 5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." Here he ascends from his actual sin, to the fountain of it, namely, corrupt nature. He was a man according to God's own heart; but from the beginning it was not so with him. He was

begotten in lawful marriage: but when the lump was shaken in the womb, it was a sinful lump. Hence the corruption of nature is called the "old man;" being as old as ourselves, older than grace, even in those that are sanctified from the womb.

4. Hear our Lord's determination of the point, John iii. 6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Behold the universal corruption of mankind—all are flesh! Not that all are frail, though that is a sad truth too: yea, and our natural frailty is an evidence of our natural corruption; but that is not the sense of the text: the meaning of it is—all are corrupt and sinful, and that naturally. Hence our Lord argues, that because they are flesh, therefore they must be born again, or else they cannot enter into the kingdom of God, vers. 3—5. And as the corruption of our nature shews the absolute necessity of regeneration, so the absolute necessity of regeneration plainly proves the corruption of our nature; for why should a man need a second birth, if his nature were not quite marred in his first birth?

5. Man certainly is sunk very low now, in comparison of what he once was. God made him but a "little lower than the angels:" but now we find him likened to the beasts that perish. He hearkened to a brute, and is now become like one of them. Like Nebuchadnezzar, his portion in his natural state is with the beasts, "minding only earthly things," Phil. iii. 19. Nay, brutes, in some sort, have the advantage of the natural man, who is sunk a degree below them. He is more negligent of what concerns him most, than the stork, or the turtle, or the crane, or the swallow, in what is for their interest, Jer. viii. 7. He is more stupid than the ox or ass, Isa. i. 3. I find him sent to school to learn of the ant, which has no guide or leader to go before her; no overseer or officer to compel or stir her up to work; no ruler, but may do as she lists, being under the dominion of none; yet "provideth her meat in the summer and harvest," Prov. vi. 6—8; while the natural man hath all these, and yet exposeth himself to eternal starving. Nay, more than all this, the Scriptures hold out the natural man, not only as wanting the good qualities of these creatures, but as a compound of the evil qualities of the worst of the creatures; in whom the fierceness of the lion, the craft of the fox, the unteachableness of the wild ass, the filthiness of the dog and swine, the poison of the asp, and such like, meet. Truth itself calls them "serpents, a generation of vipers;" yea, more, even "children of the devil," Matt. xxiii. 33; John viii. 44. Surely, then, man's nature is miserably corrupted.

6. "We are by nature the children of wrath," Eph. ii. 3.—We are worthy of, and liable to, the wrath of God; and this by nature:

therefore, doubtless, we are by nature sinful creatures. We are condemned before we have done good or evil; under the curse, before we know what it is. But, "will a lion roar in the forest when he hath no prey?" Amos iii. 4; that is, will the holy and just God roar in his wrath against man, if he be not, by his sin, made a prey for his wrath? No, he will not; he cannot. Let us conclude then, that, according to the word of God, man's nature is a corrupt nature.

If we consult experience, and observe the case of the world, in those things that are obvious to any person who will not shut his eyes against clear light, we shall quickly perceive such fruits as discover this root of bitterness. I shall propose a few things that may serve to convince us in this point:—

1. Who sees not a flood of miseries overflowing the world? Whither can a man go where he shall not dip his foot, if he go not over head and ears, in it? Every one at home and abroad, in city and country, in palaces and cottages, is groaning under some one thing or other, ungrateful to him. Some are oppressed with poverty, some chastened with sickness and pain, some are lamenting their losses, every one has a cross of one sort or another. No man's condition is so soft, but there is some thorn of uneasiness in it. At length death, the wages of sin, comes after these its harbingers, and sweeps all away.—Now, what but sin has opened the sluice of sorrow? There is not a complaint nor sigh heard in the world, nor a tear that falls from our eye, but it is an evidence that man is fallen as a star from heaven; for God distributeth sorrows in his anger, Job xxi. 17. This is a plain proof of the corruption of nature: forasmuch as those who have not yet actually sinned, have their share of these sorrows; yea, and draw their first breath in the world weeping, as if they knew this world at first sight to be a Bochim, the place of weepers. There are graves of the smallest, as well as of the largest size, in the churchyard; and there are never wanting some in the world, who are, like Rachel, weeping for their children because they are not, Mat. ii. 18.

2. Observe how early this corruption of nature begins to appear in young ones. Solomon observes, that "even a child is known by his doings," Prov. xx. 11. It may soon be discerned what way the bias of the heart lies. Do not the children of fallen Adam, before they can go alone, follow their father's footsteps? What a vast deal of little pride, ambition, sinful curiosity, vanity, wilfulness, and averseness to good, appears in them? And, when they creep out of infancy, there is a necessity of using the rod of correction, to drive away the foolishness that is bound in their hearts, Prov. xx. 15, which shews, that, if grace prevail not, the child will be as Ishmael —"a wild ass-man," as the word is, Gen. xvi. 12.

3. Take a view of the manifold gross outbreakings of sin in the world: the wickedness of man is yet great in the earth. Behold thy bitter fruits of the corruption of our nature, Hosea iv. 2. "By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, like the breaking forth of waters, and blood toucheth blood." The world is filled with filthiness, and all manner of lewdness, wickedness, and profanity. From whence comes the deluge of sin on the earth, but from the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep, the heart of man? out of which proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, &c. Mark vii. 21, 22. You will, it may be, thank God with a whole heart, that you are not like other men; and indeed you have more reason for it than, I fear, you are aware of; for, as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man, Prov. xxvii. 19. As, looking into clear water, you see your own face; so, looking into your heart, you may see other men's there; and, looking into other men's, in them you may see your own. So that the most vile and profane wretches that are in the world, should serve you for a looking-glass; in which you ought to discern the corruption of your own nature: and if you were to do so, you would, with a heart truly touched, thank God, and not yourselves, indeed, that you are not as other men in your lives; seeing the corruption of nature is the same in you as in them.

4. Cast your eye upon those terrible convulsions which the world is thrown into by the lusts of men! Lions make not a prey of lions, nor wolves of wolves: but men are turned lions and wolves to one another, biting and devouring one another. Upon how slight occasions will men sheath their swords in one another! The world is a wilderness, where the clearest fire that men can carry about with them will not frighten away the wild beasts that inhabit it, and that because they are men, and not brutes; but one way or other they will be wounded. Since Cain shed the blood of Abel, the earth has been turned into a slaughter-house; and the chase has been continued, since Nimrod began his hunting; on the earth, as in the sea, the greater still devouring the lesser. When we see the world in such a ferment, every one attacking another with words or swords, we may conclude there is an evil spirit among them. These violent heats among Adam's sons, shew the whole body to be distempered, the whole head to be sick, and the whole heart to be faint. They surely proceed from an inward cause, James iv. 1, "lusts that war in our members."

5. Consider the necessity of human laws, guarded by terrors and severities; to which we may apply what the apostle says, 1 Tim

i. 9, that "the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners," &c. Man was made for society; and God himself said of the first man, when he had created him, that it was "not meet he should be alone;" yet the case is such now, that, in society, he must be hedged in with thorns. And that from hence we may the better see the corruption of man's nature, let us consider—1. Every man naturally loves to be at full liberty himself; to have his own will for his law; and, if he were to follow his natural inclinations, he would vote himself out of the reach of all laws, divine and human. Hence some, the power of whose hands has been answerable to their natural inclination, have indeed made themselves absolute, and above laws; agreeably to man's monstrous design at first, to be as gods, Gen. iii. 5. Yet—2. There is no man that would willingly adventure to live in a lawless society: therefore even pirates and robbers have laws among themselves, though the whole society casts off all respect to law and right. Thus men discover themselves to be conscious of the corruption of nature; not daring to trust one another, but upon security. 3. How dangerous soever it is to break through the hedge, yet the violence of lust makes many daily adventure to run the risk. They will not only sacrifice their credit and conscience, which last is lightly esteemed in the world; but for the pleasure of a few moments, immediately succeeded with terror from within, they will lay themselves open to a violent death by the laws of the land wherein they live. 4. The laws are often made to yield to men's lusts. Sometimes whole societies run into such extravagances, that, like a company of prisoners, they break off their fetters, and put their guard to flight; and the voice of laws cannot be heard for the noise of arms. And seldom is there a time, wherein there are not some persons so great and daring, that the laws dare not look their impetuous lusts in the face; which made David say, in the case of Joab, who had murdered Abner, "These men, the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me," 2 Sam. iii. 39. Lusts sometimes grow too strong for laws, so that the law becomes slack, as the pulse of a dying man. Hab. i. 3, 4. 5. Consider, what necessity often appears of amending old laws, and making new ones; which have their rise from new crimes, of which man's nature is very fruitful. There would be no need of mending the hedge, if men were not, like unruly beasts, still breaking it down. It is astonishing to see what a figure the Israelites, who were separated unto God from among all the nations of the earth, make in their history; what horrible confusions were among them, when there was no king in Israel, as you may see from the eighteenth to the

twenty-first chapter of Judges: how hard it was to reform them, when they had the best of magistrates! and how quickly they turned aside again, when they got wicked rulers! I cannot but think, that one grand design of that sacred history, was to discover the corruption of man's nature, the absolute need of the Messiah, and his grace; and that we ought, in reading it, to improve it to that end. How cutting is that word which the Lord has to Samuel, concerning Saul, 1 Sam. ix. 17, "The same shall reign over"—or, as the word is, *shall restrain*—"my people." O the corruption of man's nature! the awe and dread of the God of heaven restrains them not; but they must have gods on earth to do it, "to put them to shame," Judg. xviii. 7.

6. Consider the remains of that natural corruption in the saints. Though grace has entered, yet corruption is not expelled: though they have got the new creature, yet much of the old corrupt nature remains; and these struggle together within them, as the twins in Rebekah's womb, Gal. v. 17. They find it present with them at all times, and in all places, even in the most retired corners. If a man has a troublesome neighbour, he may remove; if he has an ill servant, he may put him away at the term; if a bad yoke-fellow, he may sometimes leave the house, and be free from molestation that way: but should the saint go into a wilderness, or set up his tent on some remote rock in the sea, where never foot of man, beast, or fowl had touched, there will it be with him. Should he be with Paul, caught up to the third heavens, it will come back with him, 2 Cor. xii. 7. It follows him as the shadow doth the body; it makes a blot in the fairest line he can draw. It is like the fig-tree on the wall, which however nearly it was cut, yet still grew, till the wall was thrown down: for the roots of it are fixed in the heart, while the saint is in the world, as with bands of iron and brass. It is especially active when he would do good, Rom. vii. 21, then the fowls come down upon the carcasses. Hence often, in holy duties, the spirit of a saint, as it were, evaporates; and he is left before he is aware, like Michal, with an image in the bed instead of a husband. I need not stand to prove to the godly the corruption of nature in them, for they groan under it; and to prove it to them, were to hold out a candle to let them see the sun: as for the wicked, they are ready to account mole-hills in the saints as big as mountains, if not reckon them all hypocrites. But consider these few things on this head: 1. "If it be thus in the green tree how must it be in the dry?" The saints are not born saints, but made so by the power of regenerating grace. Have they got a new nature, and yet the old remains with them?

How great must that corruption be in others, in whom there is no grace! 2. The saints groan under it, as a heavy burden. Hear the apostle, Rom. vii. 24, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"—What though the carnal man lives at ease and quiet, and the corruption of nature is not his burden, is he therefore free from it? No, no; it is because he is dead, that he feels not the sinking weight. Many a groan is heard from a sick bed, but never any from a grave. In the saint, as in the sick man, there is a mighty struggle; life and death striving for the mastery: but in the natural man, as in the dead corpse, there is no noise; because death bears full sway. 3. The godly man resists the old corrupt nature; he strives to mortify it, yet it remains; he endeavours to starve it, and by that means to weaken it, yet it is active: how must it spread then, and strengthen itself in that soul, where it is not starved, but fed!—And this is the case of all the unregenerate, who make "provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." If the garden of the diligent afford him new work daily, in cutting off and rooting up, surely that of the sluggard must needs be "all grown over with thorns."

7. I shall add but one observation more; and that is, that in every man, naturally, the image of fallen Adam appears. Some children, by the features and lineaments of their face, do, as it were, father themselves: and thus we resemble our first parents. Every one of us bears the image and impression of the fall upon him: and to evince the truth of this, I appeal to the consciences of all, in these following particulars:

1. Is not sinful curiosity natural to us? and is not this a print of Adam's image? Gen. iii. 6. Is not man naturally much more desirous to know new things, than to practise old known truths? How much like old Adam do we look in this eagerness for novelties, and disrelish of old solid doctrines? We seek after knowledge rather than holiness, and study most to know those things which are least edifying. Our wild and roving fancies need a bridle to curb them, while good solid affections must be quickened and spurred on.

2. If the Lord, by his holy law and wise providence, puts a restraint upon us, to keep us back from any thing, does not that restraint whet the edge of our natural inclinations, and makes us so much the keener in our desires? And in this do we not betray it plainly, that we are Adam's children? Gen. iii. 2—6. I think this cannot be denied; for daily observation evinces, that it is a natural principle, that "stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant," Prov. ix. 17. The very heathens were convinced, that man was possessed with this spirit of contradiction, though they

knew not the spring of it. How often do men let themselves loose in those things, in which, had God left them at liberty, they would have bound up themselves! but corrupt nature takes a pleasure in the very jumping over the hedge. And is it not a repeating of our fathers' folly, that men will rather climb for forbidden fruit, than gather what is shaken off the tree of good providence to them, when they have God's express allowance for it?

3. Which of all the children of Adam is not naturally disposed to hear the instruction that causeth to err? And was not this the rock our first parents split upon? Gen. iii. 4—6. How apt is weak man, ever since that time, to parley with temptations! "God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not," Job xxxiii. 14, but he readily listens to Satan. Men might often come fair off, if they would dismiss temptations with abhorrence, when first they appear; if they would nip them in the bud, they would soon die away: but, alas! though we see the train laid for us, and the fire put to it, yet we stand till it runs along, and we are blown up with its force.

4. Do not the eyes in your head often blind the eyes of the mind? And was not this the very case of our first parents? Gen. iii. 6. Man is never more blind than when he is looking on the objects that are most pleasing to sense. Since the eyes of our first parents were opened to the forbidden fruit, men's eyes have been the gates of destruction to their souls; at which impure imaginations and sinful desires have entered the heart, to the wounding of the soul, wasting of the conscience, and bringing dismal effects sometimes on whole societies, as in Achan's case, Joshua vii. 21. Holy Job was aware of this danger, from these two little rolling bodies, which a very small splinter of wood can make useless; so that, with the king who durst not, with his ten thousand, meet him that came with twenty thousand against him, Luke xiv. 31, 32, he sendeth and desireth conditions of peace: Job xxxi. 1, "I made a covenant with mine eyes," &c.

5. Is it not natural to us to care for the body, even at the expense of the soul? This was one ingredient in the sin of our first parents, Gen. iii. 6. O how happy might we be, if we were but at half the pains about our souls, that we bestow upon our bodies! If that question, "What must I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 30, ran but near as often through our minds as these questions do, "What shall we eat? what shall we drink? wherewithal shall we be clothed?" Matt. vi. 31, then many a hopeless case would become very hopeful. But the truth is, most men live as if they were nothing but a lump of flesh: or as if their soul served for no other

use, but, like salt, to keep their body from corrupting. "They are flesh," John iii. 6; "they mind the things of the flesh," Rom. viii. 5; "and they live after the flesh," ver. 13. If the consent of the flesh be got to an action, the consent of the conscience is rarely waited for: yea, the body is often served, when the conscience has entered a protest against it.

6. Is not every one by nature discontented with his present lot in the world, or with some one thing or other in it? This also was Adam's case, Gen. iii. 5, 6. Some one thing is always wanting; so that man is a creature given to changes. If any doubt this, let them look over all their enjoyment; and, after a review of them, listen to their own hearts, and they will hear a secret murmuring for want of something; though perhaps, if they considered the matter aright, they would see that it is better for them to want than to have that something. Since the hearts of our first parents flew out at their eyes, on the forbidden fruit, and a night of darkness was thereby brought on the world, their posterity have a natural disease which Solomon calls, "The wandering of the desire," or, as the word is, "The walking of thy soul," Eccl. vi. 9. This is a sort of diabolical trance, wherein the soul traverses the world; feeds itself with a thousand airy nothings; snatches at this and the other created excellency, in imagination and desire; goes here, and there, and every where, except where it should go. And the soul is never cured of this disease, till conquering grace brings it back to take up its everlasting rest in God through Christ: but till this be, if man were set again in paradise, the garden of the Lord, all the pleasures there would not keep him from looking, yea, and leaping over the hedge a second time.

7. Are we not far more easily impressed and influenced by evil councils and examples, than by those that are good! You will see this was the ruin of Adam, Gen. iii. 6. Evil example, to this day, is one of Satan's master-devices to ruin men. Though we have, by nature, more of the fox than of the lamb; yet that ill property which some observe in this creature, namely, that if one lamb skip into a water, the rest near will suddenly follow, may be observed also in the disposition of the children of men; to whom it is very natural to embrace an evil way, because they see others in it before them. Ill example has frequently the force of a violent stream, to carry us over plain duty; but especially if the example be given by those we bear a great affection to; our affection, in that case, blinds our judgment; and what we should abhor in others, is complied with, to humour them. Nothing is more plain, than that generally men choose rather to do what the most do, than what the best do.

8. Who of all Adam's sons needs be taught the art of sewing fig-leaves together, to cover their nakedness? Genesis iii. 7. When we have ruined ourselves, and made ourselves naked to our shame, we naturally seek to help ourselves, by ourselves: many poor contrivances are employed, as silly and insignificant as Adam's fig-leaves. What pains are men at, to cover their sin from their own conscience, and to draw all the fair colours upon it that they can! And when once convictions are fastened upon them, so that they cannot but see themselves naked, it is as natural for them to attempt to cover it by self-deceit, as for fish to swim in water, or birds to fly in the air. Therefore the first question of the convinced is, "What shall we do?" Acts ii. 37. How shall we qualify ourselves? What shall we perform? Not considering that the new creature is God's own workmanship or deed, Eph. ii. 10, any more than Adam considered and thought of being clothed with the skins of sacrifices, Gen. iii. 21.

9. Do not Adam's children naturally follow his footsteps, in hiding themselves from the presence of the Lord? Gen. iii. 8. We are quite as blind in this matter as he was, who thought to hide himself from the presence of God amongst the shady trees of the garden. We are very apt to promise ourselves more security in a secret sin, than in one that is openly committed. "The eye of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, no eye shall see me," Job xxiv. 15. Men will freely do that in secret, which they would be ashamed to do in the presence of a child; as if darkness could hide from the all-seeing God. Are we not naturally careless of communion with God; ay, and averse to it? Never was there any communion between God and Adam's children, where the Lord himself had not the first word. If he were to let them alone they would never inquire after him. Isa. lvii. 17, "I hid me." Did he seek after a hiding God? Very far from it: "He went on in the way of his heart."

10. How loth are men to confess sin, to take guilt and shame to themselves? Was it not thus in the case before us? Gen. iii. 10. Adam confesses his nakedness, which could not be denied; but says not one word of his sin: the reason of it was, he would fain have hid it if he could. It is as natural for us to hide sin, as to commit it. Many sad instances thereof we have in this world; but a far clearer proof of it we shall get at the day of judgment, the day in which "God will judge the secrets of men," Rom. ii. 16. Many a foul mouth will then be seen which is now "wiped, and saith, I have done no wickedness," Prov. xxx. 20.

11. Is it not natural for us to extenuate our sin, and transfer the guilt upon others? When God examined our guilty first parents,

did not Adam lay the blame on the woman? and did not the woman lay the blame on the serpent? Gen. iii. 12, 13. Now Adam's children need not be taught this hellish policy; for before they can well speak if they cannot get the fact denied, they will cunningly lisp out something to lessen their fault, and lay the blame upon another. Nay, so natural is this to men, that in the greatest sins, they will lay the fault upon God himself; they will blaspheme his holy providence under the mistaken name of misfortune or ill luck, and thereby lay the blame of their sin at heaven's door. And was not this one of Adam's tricks after his fall? Gen. iii. 12, "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." Observe the order of the speech. He makes his apology in the first place; and then comes his confession: his apology is long; but his confession very short; it is all comprehended in one word, "and I did eat." How pointed and distinct is his apology, as if he was afraid his meaning should have been mistaken! "The woman," says he, or "that woman," as if he would have pointed the judge to his own works, of which we read, Gen. ii. 22. There was but one woman then in the world; so that one would think he needed not to have been so nice and exact in pointing at her: yet she is as carefully marked out in his defence, as if there had been ten thousand. "The woman whom thou gavest me:" here he speaks, as if he had been ruined with God's gift. And, to make the gift look the blacker, it is added to all this, "thou gavest to be with me," as my constant companion, to stand by me as a helper. This looks as if Adam would have fathered an ill design upon the Lord, in giving him this gift. And, after all, there is a new demonstrative here, before the sentence is complete; he says not, "The woman gave me," but "the woman she gave me," emphatically; as if he had said, *she*, even *she*, gave me of the tree. This much for his apology. But his confession is quickly over, in one word, as he spoke it, "and I did eat." There is nothing here to point out himself, and as little to shew what he had eaten. How natural is this black art to Adam's posterity! he that runs may read it. So universally does Solomon's observation hold true, Prov. xix. 3, "The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the Lord." Let us then call fallen Adam, father; let us not deny the relation, seeing we bear his image.

To shut up this point, sufficiently confirmed by concurring evidence from the Lord's word, our own experience, and observation; let us be persuaded to believe the doctrine of the corruption of our nature; and look to the second Adam, the blessed Jesus, for the

application of his precious blood, to remove the guilt of our sin; and for the efficacy of his Holy Spirit, to make us new creatures; knowing that "except we be born again, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

I. I proceed to inquire into the *corruption of nature* in the several parts thereof. But who can comprehend it? who can take the exact dimensions of it, in its breadth, length, height, and depth? "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Jer. xvii. 9. However, we may quickly perceive as much of it as may be matter of deepest humiliation, and may discover to us the absolute necessity of regeneration. Man in his natural state is altogether corrupt: both soul and body are polluted, as the apostle proves at large, Rom. iii. 10—18. As for the soul, this natural corruption has spread itself through all the faculties thereof; and is to be found in the *understanding*, the *will*, the *affections*, the *conscience*, and the *memory*.

I. *Of the Corruption of the Understanding.*

The *understanding*, that leading faculty, is despoiled of its primitive glory, and covered over with confusion. We have fallen into the hands of our grand adversary, as Samson into the hands of the Philistines, and are deprived of our two eyes. "There is none that understandeth," Rom. iii. 11. "Mind and conscience are defiled," Tit. i. 15. The natural man's apprehension of divine things is corrupt. Psalm l. 21, Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." His judgment is corrupt, and cannot, be otherwise, seeing his eye is evil: therefore the scriptures, to show that man does all wrong, says, "every one did that which was right in his own eyes," Judges xvii. 6; and xxi. 25. And his imaginations, or reasonings, must be cast down by the power of the word, being of a piece with his judgment, 2 Cor. x. 5. But, to point out this corruption of the mind or understanding more particularly, let these following things be considered:

1. There is a natural weakness in the minds of men with respect to spiritual things. The apostle determines concerning every one that is not endued with the graces of the Spirit, "That he is blind, and cannot see afar off," 2 Pet. i. 9. Hence the Spirit of God in the scriptures clothes, as it were, divine truths with earthly figures, even as parents teach their children, using similitudes, Hosea xii. 11. This, though it doth not cure, yet it proves this natural weakness in the minds of men. But there are not wanting plain proofs of it from experience. As, 1. How hard a task is it to teach many

people the common principles of our holy religion, and to make truths so plain as they may understand them? There must be "precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line." Isa. xxviii. 10. Try the same persons in other things, they will be found "wiser in their generation than the children of light." They understand their work and business in the world as well as their neighbours; though they are very stupid and unteachable in the matters of God. Tell them how they may advance their worldly wealth, or how they may gratify their lusts, and they will quickly understand these things; though it is very hard to make them know how their souls may be saved, or how their hearts may find rest in Jesus Christ. 2. Consider those who have many advantages beyond the generality of mankind; who have had the benefits of good education and instruction; yea, and are blessed with the light of grace in that measure wherein it is ascribed to the saints on earth; yet how small a portion have they of the knowledge of divine things! What ignorance and confusion still remain in their minds! How often are they perplexed even as to practical truths, and speak as children in these things! It is a pitiful weakness that we cannot perceive the things which God has revealed to us; and it must needs be a sinful weakness, since the law of God requires us to know and believe them. 3. What dangerous mistakes are to be found amongst men, in concerns of the greatest weight! What woful delusions prevail over them! Do we not often see those, who in other things are the wisest of men, the most notorious fools with respect to their soul's interest? Matt. ix. 25, "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent." Many that are eagle-eyed in the trifles of time, are like owls and bats in the light of life. Nay, truly, the life of every natural man is but one continued dream and delusion, out of which he never awakes, till either, by a new light darted from heaven into his soul, he come to himself, Luke xv. 17, or, in hell he lift up his eyes," chap. xv. 23. Therefore, in scripture account, though he be ever so wise, he is a fool, and a simple one.

2. Man's understanding is naturally overwhelmed with gross darkness in spiritual things. Man, at the instigation of the devil, attempting to break out a new light in his mind, Gen. iii. 5, instead of that, broke up the doors of the bottomless pit, so as, by the smoke thereof, to be buried in darkness. When God first made man, his mind was a lamp of light; but now, when he comes to make him over again, in regeneration, he finds it darkness; Eph. v. 8, "Ye were sometimes darkness." Sin has closed the windows of the soul, darkness is over all the region: it is the land of darkness and the shadow of death, where the light is as darkness. The

prince of darkness reigns there, and nothing but the works of darkness are framed there. We are born spiritually blind, and cannot be restored without a miracle of grace. This is thy case, whoever thou art, who are not born again. That you may be convinced in this matter, take the following proofs of it:

Proof 1. The darkness that was upon the face of the world, before, and at the time when Christ came, arising as the Sun of Righteousness upon the earth. When Adam by his sin had lost that primitive light with which he was endued at his creation, it pleased God to make a glorious revelation of his mind and will to him, as to the way of salvation, Gen. iii. 15. This was handed down by him, and other godly fathers, before the flood: yet the natural darkness of the mind of man prevailed so far against that revelation, as to carry off all sense of true religion from the old world, except what remained in Noah's family, which was preserved in the ark. After the flood, as men multiplied on the earth, the natural darkness of the mind prevailed again, and the light decayed, till it died away among the generality of mankind, and was preserved only among the posterity of Shem. And even with them it had nearly set, when God called Abraham from serving other gods, Joshua xxiv. 15. God gives Abraham a more full and clear revelation, which he communicates to his family, Genesis xviii. 19; yet the natural darkness wears it out at length, save that it was preserved among the posterity of Jacob. They being carried down into Egypt, that darkness so prevailed, as to leave them very little sense of true religion; and there was a necessity for a new revelation to be made to them in the wilderness. And many a cloud of darkness got above that, now and then, during the time from Moses to Christ. When Christ came, the world was divided into Jews and Gentiles. The Jews, and the true light with them, were within an enclosure, Psalm cxlvii. 19, 20. Between them and the Gentile world, there was a partition wall of God's making, namely, the ceremonial law: and upon that was reared up another of man's own making, namely, a rooted enmity betwixt the parties, Eph. ii. 14, 15. If we look abroad without the enclosure, and except those proselytes of the Gentiles, who by means of some rays of light breaking forth upon them from within the enclosure, having renounced idolatry, worshipped the true God, but did conform to the Mosaical rites, we see nothing but "dark places of the earth, full of the habitations of cruelty," Psalm lxxiv. 20. Gross darkness covered the face of the Gentile world, and the way of salvation was utterly unknown among them. They were drowned in superstition and idolatry, and had multiplied their idols to such a vast number, that above thirty

thousand are reckoned to have been worshipped by the men of Europe alone. Whatever wisdom was among their philosophers, "the world by" that "wisdom knew not God," 1 Cor. i. 21, and all their researches in religion were but groping in the dark, Acts xvii. 27. If we look within the enclosure, and except a few that were groaning and "waiting for the consolation of Israel," we shall see gross darkness on the face of that generation. Though "to them were committed the oracles of God," yet they were most corrupt in their doctrine. Their traditions were multiplied; but the knowledge of those things, wherein the life of religion lies, was lost. Masters of Israel knew not the nature and necessity of regeneration, John iii. 10. Their religion was to build on their birth-privileges, as children of Abraham, Matth. iii. 9, to glory in their circumcision, and other external ordinances, Phil. iii. 2, 3, and to "rest in the law," Rom. ii. 17, after they had, by their false glosses, cut it so short, as they might outwardly go well nigh to the fulfilling of it, Matth. v.

Thus was darkness over the face of the world, when Christ, the true light, came into it; and so is darkness over every soul, till he as the day-star, arises in the heart. The latter is an evidence of the former. What, but the natural darkness of men's minds, could still thus wear out the light of external revelation, in a matter upon which eternal happiness depends? Men did not forget the way of preserving their lives: but how quickly they lost the knowledge of the way of salvation of their souls, which are of infinitely more weight and worth? When the teaching of patriarchs and prophets was ineffectual, it became necessary for them to be taught of God himself, who alone can open the eyes of the understanding. But that it might appear that the corruption of man's mind lay deeper than to be cured by mere external revelation, there were but very few converted by Christ's preaching, who spoke as never man spoke," John xii. 37, 38. The great cure remained to be performed, by the Spirit accompanying the preaching of the apostles; who according to the promise John. xiv. 12, were to do greater works. And if we look to the miracles wrought by our blessed Lord, we shall find, that by applying the remedy to the soul, for the cure of bodily distempers as in the case of "the man sick of the palsy," Matth. ix. 2, he plainly discovered, that his main errand into the world was to cure the diseases of the soul. I find a miracle wrought upon one that was born blind, performed in such a way, as seems to have been designed to let the world see it, as in a glass, their case and cure, John ix. 6, "He made clay, and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay." What could more fitly represent the blindness of men's minds, than eyes closed up with earth? Isa. vi.

10, "shut your eyes;" shut them up by anointing, or "casting them with mortar," as the word will bear. And chap. xliv. 18, "He hath shut their eyes:" the word properly signifies, he hath plastered their eyes; as the house in which the leprosy had been, was to be plastered, Lev. xiv. 42. Thus the Lord's word discovers the design of that strange work; and by it, shews us, that the eyes of our understanding are naturally shut. Then the blind man must go and wash off this clay in the pool of Siloam: no other water will serve this purpose. If that pool had not represented him, whom the Father sent into the world to open the blind eyes, Isa. xlii. 7, I think the evangelist had not given us the interpretation of the name which he says, signifies *sent*, John ix. 7. So we may conclude, that the natural darkness of our minds is such as there is no cure for, but from the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ, whose eye-salve only can make us see, Rev. iii. 18.

Proof 2. Every natural man's heart and life is a mass of darkness, disorder, and confusion, how refined soever he may appear in the sight of men. "For we ourselves also," saith the apostle Paul, "were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures," Tit. iii. 3; and yet, at the time which this text refers to, he was blameless, "touching the righteousness which is in the law," Phil. iii. 6. This is a plain evidence that "the eye is evil, the whole body being full of darkness," Matth. vi. 23. The unrenewed part of mankind is rambling through the world, like so many blind men, who will neither take a guide, nor can guide themselves; and therefore are falling over this and the other precipice, into destruction. Some are running after their covetousness, till they are pierced through with many sorrows; some sticking in the mire of sensuality; others dashing themselves on the rock of pride and self-conceit: every one stumbling on some one stone of stumbling or other: all of them are running themselves upon the sword-point of justice, while they eagerly follow whither unmortified passions and affections lead them: and while some are lying along in the way, others are coming up, and falling headlong over them. Therefore, "woe unto thee" blind "world because of offences," Matth. xviii. 7. Errors in judgment swarm in the world because it is "night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth." All the unregenerate are utterly mistaken in the point of true happiness: for though Christianity hath fixed that matter in point of principle, yet nothing less than overcoming grace can fix it in the practical judgment. All men agree in the desire of being happy; but, among the unrenewed men, concerning the way to happiness, there are almost as many opinions as there are men; they being

"turned every one to his own way," Isa. liii. 6. They are like the blind men of Sodom, about Lot's house, all were seeking to find the door; some grope one part of the wall for it, some another, but none of them could certainly say, he had found it; so the natural man may stumble on any good, but the chief good. Look into thine own unregenerate heart, and there thou wilt see all turned upside down: heaven lying under, and earth at top. Look into thy life, there thou mayst see how thou art playing the madman, snatching at shadows, and neglecting the substance: eagerly flying after that which is not, and slighting that which is, and will be for ever.

Proof 3. The natural man is always as a workman left without light; either trifling or doing mischief. Try to catch thy heart at any time thou wilt, and thou wilt find it either weaving the spider's web, or hatching cockatrice eggs, Isa. lix. 5, roving through the world, or digging into the pit; filled with vanity, or else with vileness; busy doing nothing, or what is worse than nothing. A sad sign of a dark mind.

Proof 4. The natural man is void of the saving knowledge of spiritual things. He knows not what a God he has to do with: he is unacquainted with Christ, and knows not what sin is. The greatest graceless wits are blind as moles in these things. Ay, but some such can speak of them to good purpose; so might those Israelites of the temptations, signs, and miracles, which their eyes had seen, Deut. xxix. 3; to whom nevertheless, the Lord had "not given a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto that day," ver. 4. Many a man that bears the name of a Christian, may make Pharoah's confession of faith, Exod. v. 2, "I know not the Lord," neither will he let go what he commands them to part with. God is with them, as a prince in disguise among his subjects, who meets with no better treatment from them than if they were his fellows, Psalm l. 21. Do they know Christ, or see his glory, and any beauty in him, for which he is to be desired? If they did, they would not slight him as they do: a view of his glory would so darken all created excellence, that they would take him for and instead of all, and gladly close with him, as he offers himself in the gospel, John iv. 13; Psalm ix. 10; Matt. xiii. 44—46. Do they know what sin is, who nurse the serpent in their bosom, hold fast deceit, and refuse to let it go? I own, indeed, that they may have a natural knowledge of these things, as the unbelieving Jews had of Christ, whom they saw and conversed with; but there was a spiritual glory in him, perceived by believers only, John i. 14, and in respect of that glory, "the" unbelieving "world knew him not," ver. 10. The spiritual knowledge of them they cannot have it is above the reach of

the carnal mind. 1 Cor. ii. 14. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." He may indeed discourse of them, but in no other way than one can talk of honey or vinegar, who never tasted the sweetness of the one, nor the sourness of the other. He has some notions of spiritual truths, but sees not the things themselves that are wrapt up in the words of truth, 1 Tim. i. 7. "Understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." In a word, natural men fear, seek, confess, they know not what. Thus you may see man's understanding naturally overwhelmed with gross darkness in spiritual things.

3. There is in the mind of man a natural bias to evil, whereby it comes to pass, that whatever difficulties it finds while occupied about things truly good, it acts with a great deal of ease in evil, as being in that case in its own element, Jer. iv. 22. The carnal mind drives heavily on in the thoughts of good, but furiously in the thoughts of evil. While holiness is before it, fetters are upon it; but when once it has got over the hedge, it is as a bird got out of a cage, and becomes a freethinker indeed. Let us reflect a little on the apprehension and imagination of the carnal mind, and we shall find incontestable evidence of this woful bias to evil.

Proof 1. As when a man by a violent stroke on the head loses his sight, there arises to him a kind of false light whereby he seems to see a thousand airy nothings; so man, being struck blind to all that is truly good for his eternal interest, has a light of another sort brought into his mind; his eyes are opened, knowing evil; and so are the words of the tempter verified, Gen. iii. 5. The words of the prophet are plain—"They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge," Jer. iv. 22. The mind of man has a natural dexterity to devise mischief; there are not any so simple as to want skill to contrive ways to gratify their lusts, and ruin their souls, though the power of every one's hand cannot reach to put their devices in execution. No one needs to be taught this black art; but, as weeds grow up of their own accord in the neglected ground, so does this wisdom which is earthly, sensual, devilish, Jam. iii. 15, grow up in the minds of men, by virtue of the corruption of their nature. Why should we be surprised with the product of corrupt wits, their cunning devices to affront Heaven, to oppose and run down truth and holiness, and to gratify their own and other men's lusts? They row with the stream, no wonder that they make great progress; their stock is within them, and increases by using it, and the works of darkness are contrived with the greater advantage, because the mind is wholly destitute of spiritual light, which, if it

were in them in any measure, would so far mar the work: 1 John iii. 9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;" he does it not as by art, wilfully and habitually, for "his seed remaineth in him." But, on the other hand, "It is as a sport to a fool to do mischief: but a man of understanding hath wisdom," Prov. x. 23. "To do witty mischief nicely," as the words import, "is as a sport or play to a fool;" it comes off with him easily; and why, but because he is a fool, and hath not wisdom, which would mar the contrivances of darkness! The more natural a thing is, the more easily it is done.

Proof 2. Let the corrupt mind have but the advantage of one's being employed in, or present at, some piece of service for God, that so the device, if not in itself sinful, yet may become sinful by its unseasonableness: it will quickly fall upon some device or expedient, by its starting aside, which deliberation, in season, could not produce. Thus Saul, who wist not what to do before the priest began to consult God, is quickly determined when once the priest's hand was in: his own heart then gave him an answer, and would not allow him to wait an answer from the Lord, 1 Sam. xiv. 18, 19. Such a devilish dexterity hath the carnal mind in devising what may most effectually divert men from their duty to God.

Proof 3. Doth not the carnal mind naturally strive to grasp spiritual things in imagination, as if the soul were quite immersed in flesh and blood, and would turn every thing into its own shape? Let men who are used to the forming of the most abstracted notions, look into their own souls, and they will find this bias in their minds; whereof the idolotry which did of old, and still doth, so much prevail in the world, is an incontestible evidence: for it plainly shews, that men naturally would have a visible deity, and see what they worship, and therefore they "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image," &c. Rom. i. 23. The reformation of these nations, blessed be the Lord for it, has banished idolatry, and images too, out of our churches; but heart-reformation only can break down mental idolatry, and banish the more subtile and refined image worship, and representations of the Deity, out of the minds of men. The world, in the time of its darkness, was never more prone to the former, than the unsanctified mind is to the latter. Hence are horrible, monstrous, and misshapen thoughts of God, Christ, the glory above, and all spiritual things.

Proof 4. What a difficult task is it to detain the carnal mind before the Lord! how averse is it to entertain good thoughts, and dwell in the meditation of spiritual things! If a person be driven, at any time, to think of the great concerns of his soul, it is not

harder work to hold in an unruly hungry beast, than to hedge in the carnal mind, that it get not away to the vanities of the world again. When God is speaking to men by his word, or they are speaking to him in prayer, does not the mind often leave them before the Lord, like so many "idols that have eyes, but see not, and ears, but hear not." The carcass is laid down before God, but the world gets away the heart; though the eyes be closed, the man sees a thousand vanities; the mind, in the mean time, is like a bird got loose out of a cage, skipping from bush to bush; so that, in effect, the man never comes to himself till he is gone from the presence of the Lord. Say not, it is impossible to get the mind fixed—it is hard, indeed, but not impossible: grace from the Lord can do it, Psalm cviii. 1; agreeable objects will do it. A pleasant speculation will arrest the minds of the inquisitive; the worldly man's mind is in little hazard of wandering, when he is contriving his business, casting up his accounts, or telling his money; if he answers you not at first, he tells you he did not hear you, he was busy; his mind was fixed. Were we admitted into the presence of a king, to petition for our lives, we should be in no hazard of gazing through the chamber of presence. But this is the case, the carnal mind, employed about any spiritual good, is out of its element, and therefore cannot fix.

Proof 5. But however hard it is to keep the mind on good thoughts, it sticks like glue to what is evil and corrupt like itself, 2 Pet. ii. 14, "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin." Their eyes cannot cease from sin, (so the words are constructed,) that is, their hearts and minds, venting by the eyes what is within, are like a furious beast, which cannot be held in when once it has got out its head. Let the corrupt imagination once be let loose on its favourite object, it will be found hard work to call it back again, though both reason and will are for its retreat. For then it is in its own element; and to draw it off from its impurities, is like drawing a fish out of the water, or rending a limb from a man. It runs like fire set to a train of powder, that rests not till it can get no farther.

Paoof 6. Consider how the carnal imagination supplies the want of real objects to the corrupt heart, that it may make sinners happy, at least in the imaginary enjoyment of their lusts. Thus the corrupt heart feeds itself with imagination-sins; the unclean person is filled with speculative impurities, "having eyes full of adultery;" the covetous man fills his heart with the world, though he cannot get his hands full of it; the malicious person with delight acts his revenge within his own breast: the envious man, within his own

narrow soul, beholds with satisfaction his neighbour laid low; and every lust finds the corrupt imagination a friend to it in time of need. This the heart does, not only when people are awake, but sometimes even when they are asleep; whereby it comes to pass, that those sins are acted in dreams, which their hearts pant after when they are awake. I am aware that some question the sinfulness of these things; but can it be thought they are consistent with that holy nature and frame of spirit which was in innocent Adam, and in Jesus Christ, and should be in every one? It is the corruption of nature, then, that makes filthy dreamers condemned, Jude, ver. 8. Solomon had experience of the exercise of grace in sleep: in a dream he prayed, in a dream he made the best choice; both were accepted of God, 1 Kings iii. 5—15. And if a man may, in his sleep, do what is good and acceptable to God, why may he not also, when asleep, do that which is evil and displeasing to God? The same Solomon would have men aware of this, and prescribes the best remedy against it, namely, "the law upon the heart," Prov. vi. 20, 21. "When thou sleepest," says he, ver. 22, "it shall keep thee," to wit, from sinning in thy sleep; that is, from sinful dreams: for a man's being kept from sin, not his being kept from affliction, is the immediate proper effect of the law of God impressed upon the heart, Psalm cxix. 11. And thus the whole verse is to be understood, as appears from ver. 23. "For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." Now, the law is a lamp and light, as it guides in the way of duty; and instructing reproofs from the law are the way of life, as they keep from sin: they guide not into the way of peace, but as they lead into the way of duty; nor do they keep a man out of trouble, but as they keep him from sin. Remarkable is the particular which Solomon instances, namely, the sin of uncleanness, "to keep thee from the evil woman," &c. ver. 24, which is to be joined to ver. 22, enclosing the 23d in a parenthesis, as some versions have it. These things may suffice to convince us of the natural bias of the mind to evil.

4. There is in the carnal mind an opposition to spiritual truths, and an aversion to receive them. It is as little a friend to divine truths, as it is to holiness. The truths of natural religion, which do, as it were, force their entry into the minds of natural men, they hold prisoners in unrighteousness, Rom. i. 18. As for the truths of revealed religion, there is an evil heart of unbelief in them, which opposes their entry; and there is an armed force necessary to captivate the mind to the belief of them, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5. God has made a revelation of his mind and will to sinners, concerning the way of

salvation; he has given us the doctrine of his holy word: but do natural men believe it indeed? No, they do not; "for he that believeth not on the Son of God, believeth not God," as is plain from 1 John v. 10. They believe not the promises of the word: they look on them, in effect, only as fair words; for those who receive them are thereby made "partakers of the divine nature," 2 Pet. i. 4. The promises are as silver cords let down from heaven, to draw sinners unto God, and to waft them over into the promised land; but they cast them from them. They believe not the threatenings of the word. As men travelling in deserts carry fire about with them, to frighten away wild beasts, so God has made his law a fiery law, Deut. xxxiii. 2, surrounding it with threats of wrath: but men are naturally more brutish than beasts themselves; and will needs touch the fiery smoking mountain, though they should be thrust through with a dart. I doubt not but most, if not all of you, who are yet in the black state of nature, will here plead, Not Guilty; but remember, the carnal Jews in Christ's time were as confident as you are, that they believed Moses, John ix. 28, 29. But he confutes their confidence, roundly telling them, John v. 46, "Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me." If you believe the truths of God, you dared not to reject, as you do, Him who is truth itself. The very difficulty you find in assenting to this truth, discovers that unbelief which I am charging you with. Has it not proceeded so far with some at this day, that it has steeled their foreheads with impudence and impiety, openly to reject all revealed religion? Surely it is "out of the abundance of the heart their mouth speaketh." But, though ye set not your mouth against the heavens, as they do, the same bitter root of unbelief is in all men by nature, and reigns in you, and will reign, till overcoming grace brings your minds to the belief of the truth. To convince you in this point, consider these three things:

Proof 1. How few are there who have been blessed with an inward illumination, by the special operation of the Spirit of Christ, leading them into a view of divine truths in their spiritual and heavenly lustre! How have you learned the truths of religion, which you pretend to believe? You have them merely by the benefit of external revelation, and by education; so that you are Christians, just because you were not born and bred in a Pagan, but in a Christian country. You are strangers to the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in your hearts; and so you cannot have the assurance of faith, with respect to the outward divine revelation made in the word, 1 Cor. ii. 10—12, therefore you are still unbelievers. "It is written in the Prophets, They shall be

all taught of God.—Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me," says our Lord, John vi. 45. Now, ye have not come to Christ, therefore ye have not been taught of God: ye have not been so taught, and therefore ye have not come; ye believe not. Behold the revelation from which the faith, even of the fundamental principles in religion, springs, Matt. xvi. 16, 17, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.—Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." If ever the Spirit of the Lord take you in hand, to work in you that faith which is of the operation of God, it may be, that as much time will be spent in rasing the old foundation, as will make you find the necessity of the working of his mighty power, to enable you to believe the very foundation-principles, which now you think you make no doubt of, Eph. i. 19.

Proof 2. How many professors have made shipwreck of their faith, such as it was, in time of temptation and trial! See how they fall, like stars from heaven, when Antichrist prevails! 2 Thess. ii. 12, "God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth." They fall into damning delusions; because they never really believed the truth, though they themselves, and others too, thought they did believe it. That house is built on the sand, and that faith is but ill-founded, that cannot stand, but is quite overthrown, when the storm comes.

Proof 3. Consider the utter inconsistency of most men's lives with the principles of religion which they profess: you may as soon bring east and west together, as their principles and practice. Men believe that fire will burn them; and therefore they will not throw themselves into it: but the truth is, most men live as if they thought the gospel a mere fable, and the wrath of God, revealed in his word against their unrighteousness and ungodliness, a mere scarecrow. If you believe the doctrines of the word, how is it that you are so unconcerned about the state of your souls before the Lord? how is it that you are so little concerned about this weighty point, whether you be born again or not? Many live as they were born, and are likely to die as they live, and yet live in peace. Do such persons believe the sinfulness and misery of a natural state? Do they believe that they are children of wrath? Do they believe that there is no salvation without regeneration, and no regeneration but what makes a man a new creature? If you believe the promises of the word, why do you not embrace them, and seek to enter into the promised rest? What sluggard would not dig for a hid

treasure, if he really believed that he might so obtain it? Men will work and toil for a maintenance, because they believe that by so doing they shall get it; yet they will be at no tolerable pains for the eternal weight of glory! why, but because they do not believe the word of promise? Heb. iv. 1, 2. If you believe the threatenings, how is it that you live in your sins; live out of Christ, and yet hope for mercy? Do such persons believe God to be the holy and just One, who will by no means clear the guilty? No, no; none believe; none, or next to none, believe what a just God the LORD is, and how severely he punisheth.

5. There is in the mind of man a natural proneness to lies and falsehood, which favours his lusts: "They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies," Psalm lviii. 3. We have this, with the rest of the corruption of our nature, from our first parents. God revealed the truth to them: but through the solicitation of the tempter, they first doubted, then disbelieved it, and embraced a lie instead of it. For an incontestable evidence hereof, we may see the first article of the devil's creed, "ye shall not surely die," Gen. iii. 4, which was obtruded by him on our first parents, and by them received, naturally embraced by their posterity, and held fast, till light from heaven obliges them to quit it. It spreads itself through the lives of natural men: who, till their consciences are awakened, walk after their own lusts, still retaining the principle, "That they shall not surely die." And this is often improved to such perfection, that man says, in the face of the denounced curse, "I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst," Deut. xxix. 19. Whatever advantage the truths of God have over error, by means of education or otherwise, error has always, with the natural man, this advantage against truth, namely, that there is something within him which says, "O that it were true!" so that the mind lies fair for assenting to it. And this is the reason of it: the true doctrine is, "the doctrine that is according to godliness," 1 Tim. vi. 3, and "the truth which is after godliness," Titus i. 1. Error is the doctrine which is according to ungodliness; for there is not an error in the mind, nor an untruth vented in the world, in matters of religion, but has an affinity with one corruption of the heart or another; according to that saying of the apostle, 2 Thess. ii. 12, "They believed not the truth," but had pleasure in unrighteousness. So that truth and error, being otherwise attended with equal advantages for their reception, error, by this means, has most ready access into the minds of men in their natural state. Wherefore, it is not strange that men reject the simplicity of gospel truths and institutions, and

greedily embrace error and external pomp in religion, seeing they are so agreeable to the lusts of the heart, and the vanity of the mind of the natural man. Hence also it is, that so many embrace atheistical principles; for none do it but in compliance with their irregular passions; none but those, whose advantage it would be that there were no God.

6. Man is naturally high-minded; for when the gospel comes in power to him, it is employed in "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God," 2 Cor. x. 5. Lowliness of mind is not a flower that grows in the field of nature; but is planted by the finger of God in a renewed heart, and learned of the lowly Jesus. It is natural to man to think highly of himself, and what is his own: for the stroke which he has got by his fall in Adam, has produced a false light, whereby mole-hills about him appear like mountains; and a thousand airy beauties present themselves to his deluded fancy. "Vain man would be wise," so he accounts himself, and so he would be accounted by others, "though man be born like a wild ass's colt," Job xi. 12. His way is right, because it is his own: for "every way of man is right in his own eyes," Prov. xxi. 2. His state is good, because he knows none better; he is alive without the law, Rom. vii. 9, and therefore his hope is strong, and his confidence firm. It is another tower of Babel, reared up against heaven; and it will not fall, while the power of darkness can hold it up. The word batters it, yet it stands; one while breaches are made in it, but they are quickly repaired; at another time, it is all made to shake, but still it is kept up; till either God himself by his Spirit raises a heart-quake within the man, which tumbles it down, and leaves not one stone upon another, 2 Cor. x. 4, 5, or death batters it down, and razes the foundation of it, Luke xvi. 23. And as the natural man thinks highly of himself, so he thinks meanly of God, whatever he pretends, Psalm l. 21, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." The doctrine of the gospel, and the mystery of Christ, are foolishness to him; and in his practice he treats them as such, 1 Cor. i. 18, and ii. 14. He brings the word and the works of God, in the government of the world, before the bar of his carnal reason; and there they are presumptuously censured and condemned, Hos. xiv. 9. Sometimes the ordinary restraints of Providence are taken off, and Satan is permitted to stir up the carnal mind: and, in that case, it is like an ant's nest, uncovered and disturbed; doubts, denials, and hellish reasonings, crowd in it, and cannot be overcome by all the arguments brought against them, till power from on high subdue the mind, and still the mutiny of the corrupt principles.

Thus much of the corruption of the understanding; which, although the half be not told, may discover to you the absolute necessity of regenerating grace. Call the understanding now, "Ichabod; for the glory is departed from it," 1 Samuel iv. 21. Consider this, you that are in the state of nature, and groan out your case before the Lord, that the Sun of Righteousness may arise upon you, lest you be shut up in everlasting darkness. What avails your wordly wisdom? What do your attainments in religion avail, while your understanding lies wrapt up in its natural darkness and confusion, utterly void of the light of life? Whatever be the natural man's gifts or attainments, we must, as in the case of the leper, Lev. xiii. 44, "pronounce him utterly unclean, his plague is in his head." But that is not all; it is in his heart too; his will is corrupted, as I shall soon shew.

II. *Of the Corruption of the Will.*

The Will, that commanding faculty, which at first was faithful and ruled with God, is now turned traitor, and rules with and for the devil. God planted it in man, "wholly a right seed;" but now it is "turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine." It was originally placed in due subordination to the will of God, as was shewn before; but now it is wholly gone aside. However some magnify the power of free-will, a view of the spirituality of the law, to which acts of moral discipline in no wise answer, and a deep insight into the corruption of nature, given by the inward operation of the Spirit, convincing of sin, righteousness, and judgment, would make men find an absolute need of the power of free grace, to remove the bands of wickedness from off their free-will. To open up this plague of the heart, I offer these following things to be considered:

1. There is, in the unrenewed will, an utter inability for what is truly good and acceptable in the sight of God. The natural man's will is in Satan's fetters, hemmed in within the circle of evil, and cannot move beyond it, any more than a dead man can raise himself out of his grave, Eph. ii. 1. We deny him not a power to choose, pursue, and act what is good, as to the matter; but though he can will what is good and right, he can will nothing aright and well, John xv. 5. Christ says, "Without me," that is, separate from me, as a branch from the stock, as both the word and context will bear, "ye can do nothing;" which means, nothing truly and spiritually good. His very choice and desire of spiritual things, is carnal and selfish, John vi. 26. "Ye seek me—because ye did eat of

the loaves and were filled." He not only does not come to Christ, but "he cannot come," ver. 44. And what can he do acceptable to God, who believeth not on him whom the Father hath sent? To prove this inability for good in the unregenerate, consider these two things:

Proof. 1. How often does the light so shine before men's eyes, that they cannot but see the good which they should choose, and the evil which they should refuse: and yet their hearts have no more power to comply with that light, than as if they were arrested by some invisible hand! They see what is right, yet they follow, and cannot but follow what is wrong. Their consciences tell them the right way, and approve of it too, yet their will cannot be brought up to it: their corruption so chains them, that they cannot embrace it; so that they sigh and go backward, notwithstanding their light. If it be not thus, how is it that the word and way of holiness meet with such entertainment in the world? How is it that clear arguments and reason on the side of piety and a holy life, which seem to have weight even with the carnal mind, do not bring men over to that side? Although the existence of a heaven and a hell were only probable, it were sufficient to determine the will to the choice of holiness, were it capable of being determined thereto by mere reason: but men, "knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them," Rom. i. 31. And how is it that those who magnify the power of free-will, do not confirm their opinion before the world, by an ocular demonstration in a practice as far above others in holiness, as the opinion of their natural ability is above that of others? Or is it maintained only for the protection of lusts, which men may hold fast as long as they please; and when they have no more use for them, throw them off in a moment, and leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom? Whatever use some make of that principle, it does of itself, and in its own nature, cast a broad shadow for a shelter to wickedness of heart and life. It may be observed, that the generality of the hearers of the gospel, of all denominations, are plagued with it; for it is a root of bitterness, natural to all men; from whence spring so much fearlessness about the soul's eternal state, so many delays and excuses in that weighty matter, whereby much work is laid up for a deathbed by some, while others are ruined by a legal walk, and neglect the life of faith, and the making use of Christ for sanctification; all flowing from the persuasion of sufficient natural abilities. So agreeable is it to corrupt nature.

Proof 2. Let those, who, by the power of the spirit of bondage,

have had the law opened before them in its spirituality, for their conviction, speak and tell, if they found themselves able to incline their hearts toward it, in that case; nay, whether the more that light shone into their souls, they did not find their hearts more and more unable to comply with it. There are some who have been brought unto "the place of the breaking forth," who are yet in the devil's camp, who from their experience can tell, that light let into the mind cannot give life to the will, to enable it to comply therewith; and could give their testimony here, if they would. But take Paul's testimony concerning it, who, in his unconverted state, was far from believing his utter inability for good; but learned it by experience, Rom. vii. 8—13. I own, the natural man may have a kind of love to the letter of the law: but here lies the stress of the matter, he looks on the holy law in a carnal dress; and so, while he embraces the creature of his own fancy, he thinks that he has the law; but in very deed he is without the law: for as yet he sees it not in its spirituality; if he did, he would find it the very reverse of his own nature, and what his will could not fall in with, till changed by the power of grace.

2. There is in the unrenewed will an aversion to good. Sin is the natural man's element; he is as unwilling to part with it as fish are to come out of the water on to dry land. He not only cannot come to Christ, but he *will not come*, John v. 40. He is polluted, and hates to be washed, Jer. xiii. 27, "Wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?" He is sick, yet utterly averse to the remedy: he loves his disease so, that he loathes the Physician. He is a captive, a prisoner, and a slave; but he loves his conqueror, his jailor, and master: he is fond of his fetters, prison, and drudgery, and has no liking to his liberty. For proof of the aversion to good in the will of man, I will instance in some particulars:

Proof 1. The untowardness of children. Do we not see them naturally lovers of sinful liberty? How unwilling are they to be hedged in! How averse to restraint! The world can bear witness, that they are "as bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke:" and more, that it is far easier to bring young bullocks tamely to bear the yoke, than to bring young children under discipline, and make them tamely submit to be restrained in sinful liberty. Every body may see in this, as in a glass, that man is naturally wild and wilful, according to Zophar's observation, Job xi. 12, that "man is born like a wild ass's colt." What can be said more? He is like a colt, the colt of an ass, the colt of a wild ass. Compare Jer. ii. 24, "A wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffeth up the wind at her pleasure; in her occasion who can turn her away?"

Proof 2. What pain and difficulty do men often find in bringing their hearts to religious duties! and what a task is it to the carnal heart to abide at them! It is a pain to it, to leave the world but a little to come before God. It is not easy to borrow time from the many things, to spend it upon the one thing needful. Men often go to God in duties, with their faces towards the world; and when their bodies are on the mount of ordinances, their hearts will be found at the foot of the hill "going after their covetousness," Ezek. xxxiii. 31. They are soon wearied of well-doing; for holy duties are not agreeable to their corrupt nature. Take notice of them at their worldly business, set them down with their carnal company, or let them be enjoying a lust; time seems to them to fly, and drive furiously, so that it is gone before they are aware. But how heavily does it pass, while a prayer, a sermon, or a Sabbath lasts! The Lord's day is the longest day of all the week, with many; therefore they must sleep longer that morning, and go sooner to bed that night, than ordinarily they do; that the day may be made of a tolerable length: for their hearts say within them, "When will the Sabbath be gone?" Amos viii. 5. The hours of worship are the longest hours of that day: hence, when duty is over, they are like men eased of a burden; and when sermon is ended, many have neither the grace nor the good manners to stay till the blessing is pronounced, but, like the beasts, their head is away, so soon as a man puts his hand to loose them; and why? because, while they are at ordinances, they are, as Doeg, "detained before the Lord," 1 Sam. xxii. 7.

Proof 3. Consider how the will of the natural man rebels against the light, Job xxiv. 13. Light sometimes enters in, because he is not able to keep it out: but he loves darkness rather than light. Sometimes, by the force of truth, the outer door of the understanding is broken up; but the inner door of the will remains fast bolted. Then lusts rise against light: corruption and conscience encounter, and fight as in the field of battle, till corruption getting the upper hand, conscience is forced to turn its back; convictions are murdered, and truth is made and held prisoner, so that it can create no more disturbance. While the word is preached or read, or the rod of God is upon the natural man, sometimes convictions are darted in upon him, and his spirit is wounded in greater or lesser measure: but these convictions not being able to make him fall, he runs away with the arrows sticking in his conscience; and at length, one way or other, gets them out, and makes himself whole again. Thus, while the light shines, men, naturally averse to it, wilfully shut their eyes, till God is provoked to blind them judicially, and they

become proof against his word and providences too: so, go where they will, they can sit at ease; there is never a word from heaven to them, that goeth deeper than their ears. Hos. iv. 17, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone."

Proof 4. Let us observe the resistance made by elect souls, when the Spirit of the Lord is at work, to bring them from "the power of Satan unto God." Zion's King gets no subjects but by stroke of sword, "in the day of his power," Psalm cx. 2, 3. None come to him, but such as are drawn by a divine hand, John iv. 44. When the Lord comes to the soul, he finds the strong man keeping the house, and a deep peace and security there, while the soul is fast asleep in the devil's arms. But "the prey must be taken from the mighty, and the captive delivered." Therefore the Lord awakens the sinner, opens his eyes, and strikes him with terror, while the clouds are black above his head, and the sword of vengeance is held to his breast. Now, he is at no small pains to put a fair face on a black heart, to shake off his fears, to make head against them, and to divert himself from thinking on the unpleasant and ungrateful subject of his soul's case. If he cannot so rid himself from them, carnal reason is called in to help, and urges, that there is no ground for such great fear; all may be well enough yet; and if it be ill with him, it will be ill with many. When the sinner is beat from this, and sees no advantage in going to hell with company, he resolves to leave his sins, but cannot think of breaking off so soon; there is time enough, and he will do it afterwards. Conscience says, "To-day if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts:" but he cries, "To-morrow, Lord; to-morrow, Lord;" and "just now, Lord;" till that now is never like to come. Thus many times he comes from his prayers and confessions, with nothing but a breast full of sharper convictions; for the heart does not always cast up the sweet morsel, as soon as confession is made with the mouth, Judges x. 10—16. And when conscience obliges him to part with some lusts, others are kept as right eyes and right hands, and there are rueful looks after those that are put away; as it was with the Israelites, who with bitter hearts remembered "the fish they did eat in Egypt freely," Numb. xi. 5. Nay, when he is so pressed, that he must needs say before the Lord, that he is content to part with all his idols; the heart will be giving the tongue the lie. In a word, the soul, in this case, will shift from one thing to another; like a fish with the hook in its jaws, till it can do no more, for power is come to make it yield, as "the wild ass in her month," Jer. ii. 24.

3. There is in the will of man a natural "proneness to evil," a

woful bent towards sin. Men naturally are "bent to backslidding from God," Hos. xi. 7. They hang, as the word is, towards backsliding; even as a hanging wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. Set holiness and life upon the one side, sin and death upon the other; and leave the unrenewed will to itself, it will choose sin, and reject holiness. This is no more to be doubted, than that water, poured on the side of a hill will run downward, and not upward; or that a flame will ascend, and not descend.

Proof 1. Is not the way of evil the first way which the children of men go? Do not their inclinations plainly appear on the wrong side, while yet they have no cunning to hide them? In the first opening of our eyes in the world, we look asquint, hell-ward, not heaven-ward. As soon as it appears that we are rational creatures, it appears that we are sinful creatures, Psalm lviii. 3, "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they be born." Prov. xxii. 15, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child: but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." Folly is bound in the heart, it is woven into our very nature. The knot will not unloose; it must be broken asunder by strokes. Words will not do it, the rod must be taken to drive it away; and if it be not driven far away, the heart and it will meet and knit again. Not that the rod of itself will do this: the sad experience of many parents testifies the contrary; and Solomon himself tells you, Prov. xxvii. 22, "Though thou shouldst bray a fool in a mortar, among wheat, with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him;" it is so bound in his heart. But the rod is an ordinance of God, appointed for that end; which, like the word, is made effectual, by the Spirit's accompanying his own ordinance. This, by the way, shews that parents, in administering correction to their children, have need, first of all, to correct their own irregular passions, and look upon it as a matter of awful solemnity, setting about it with much dependance on the Lord, and following it with prayer for the blessing, if they would have it effectual.

Proof. 2. How easily are men led aside to sin! The children who are not persuaded to good, are otherwise simple ones, easily wrought upon: those whom the word cannot draw to holiness, are "led by Satan at his pleasure." Profane Esau, that cunning man, Gen. xxv. 27, was as easily cheated of the blessing as if he had been a fool or an idiot. The more natural a thing is, the more easy it is: so Christ's yoke is easy to the saints, in so far as they are partakers of the divine nature: and sin is easy to the unrenewed man; but to learn to do good, is as difficult as for the Ethiopian to change his skin; because the will naturally hangs towards evil, and is averse

to good. A child can cause a round thing to run, when he cannot move a square thing of the same weight; for the roundness makes it fit for motion, so that it goes with a touch. Even so, men find the heart easily carried towards sin, while it is as a dead weight in the way of holiness; we must seek for the reason of this from the natural set and disposition of the heart, whereby it is prone and bent to evil. Were man's will, naturally, but in equal balance to good and evil, the one might be embraced with as little difficulty as the other; but experience testifies it is not so. In the sacred history of the Israelites, especially in the Book of Judges, how often do we find them forsaking Jehovah, the mighty God, and doting upon the idols of the nations about them! But did ever any one of these nations grow fond of Israel's God, and forsake their own idols? No, no; though man is naturally given to changes, it is but from evil to evil, not from evil to good. Jer. ii. 10, 11, "Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? But my people have changed their glory, for that which doth not profit." Surely the will of man stands not in equal balance, but has a cast to the wrong side.

Proof 3. Consider how men go on still in the way of sin, till they are stopped, and that by another hand than their own; Isa. lvii. 17, "I hid me, and he went on forwardly in the way of his heart." If God withdraw his restraining hand, and lay the reins on the sinner's neck, he is under no doubt what way to choose; for, observe it, the way of sin is the way of his heart; his heart naturally lies that way; it hath a natural propensity to sin. As long as God suffers them, they walk in their own way, Acts xiv. 16. The natural man is so fixed in his woful choice, that there needs no more to shew he is off from God's way, than to say he is upon his own.

Proof. 4. Whatsoever good impressions are made on him, they do not last. Though his heart be firm as a stone, yea, harder than the nether-millstone, in point of receiving of them; it is otherwise unstable as water, and cannot keep them. It works against the receiving of them; and, when they are made, it works them off, and returns to its natural bias; Hos. vi. 4, "Your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away." The morning cloud promises a heavy shower, but, when the sun arises, it vanisheth: the sun beats upon the early dew, and it evaporates; so the husbandman's expectation is disappointed. Such is the goodness of the natural man. Some sharp affliction, or piercing conviction, obliges him, in some sort, to turn from his evil course: but his will not being renewed, religion is still against the grain with

him, and therefore this goes off again, Psalm lxxviii. 34—37. Though a stone thrown up into the air, may abide there a little while, yet its natural heaviness will bring it down again: so do unrenewed men return to their wallowing in the mire; because, though they washed themselves, yet their swinish nature was not changed. It is hard to cause wet wood to take fire, hard to make it keep alight; but it is harder than either of these to make the unrenewed will retain attained goodness; which is a plain evidence of the natural bent of the will to evil.

Proof 5. Do the saints serve the Lord now, as they were wont to serve sin, in their unconverted state? Very far from it, Rom. vi. 20, "When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." Sin got all, and admitted no partner; but now, when they are the servants of Christ, are they free from sin? Nay, there are still with them some deeds of the old man, shewing that he is but dying in them; and hence their hearts often misgive them, and slip aside unto evil, "when they would do good," Rom. vii. 21. They need to watch, and keep their hearts with all diligence; and their sad experience teaches them, "That he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool," Prov. xxviii. 26. If it be thus in the green tree, how must it be in the dry?

4. There is a natural contrariety, direct opposition, and enmity, in the will of man, to God himself, and his holy will, Rom. viii. 7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The will was once God's deputy in the soul, set to command there for him; but now it is set up against him. If you would have the picture of it in its natural state, the very reverse of the will of God represents it. If the fruit hanging before one's eye be but forbidden, that is sufficient to draw the heart after it. Let me instance in the sin of profane swearing and cursing, to which some are so abandoned, that they take a pride in it, belching out horrid oaths and curses, as if hell opened with the opening of their mouths; or larding their speeches with minced oaths; and all this without any manner of provocation, though even that would not excuse them. Pray, tell me—1. What profit is there here? A thief gets something for his pains; a drunkard gets a belly-full; but what do you get? Others serve the devil for pay; but you are volunteers, who expect no reward but your work itself, in affronting Heaven; and if you repent not, you will get your reward in full measure; when you go to hell, your work will follow you. The drunkard shall not have a drop of water to cool his tongue there; nor will the covetous man's wealth follow him into the other world! you may drive on your old trade there;

eternity will be long enough to give you your heart's fill of it. 2. What pleasure is there here, but what flows from your trampling on the holy law? Which of your senses doth swearing and cursing gratify? If it gratify your ears, it can only be by the noise it makes against the heavens. Though you had a mind to give up yourselves to all manner of profanity and sensuality, there is so little pleasure can be strained out of these sins, that we must needs conclude, your love to them, in this case, is a love to them for themselves, a devilish unhired love, without any prospect of profit or pleasure from them otherwise. If any shall say, these are monsters of men: be it so; yet, alas! the world is full of such monsters; they are to be found almost every where. Allow me to say, they must be admitted as the mouth of the whole unregenerate world against heaven, Rom. iii. 14, "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." Ver. 19, "Now we know, that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

I have a charge against every unregenerate man and woman, young and old, to be proved by the testimony of Scripture, and their own consciences; namely that whether they be professors or profane seeing they are not born again, they are heart enemies to God; to the Son of God; to the Spirit of God; and to the law of God. Hear this, ye careless souls, that live at ease in your natural state.

(1.) Ye are enemies to God in your mind, Col. i. 21. Ye are not as yet reconciled to him; the natural enmity is not as yet slain, though perhaps it lies hid, and ye do not perceive it. 1. You are enemies to the very being of God, Psalm xiv. 1, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." The proud man wishes that none were above himself; the rebel, that there were no king; and the unrenewed man, who is a mass of pride and rebellion, that there were no God. He saith it in his heart, he wisheth it were so, though he is ashamed and afraid to speak it out. That all natural men are such fools, appears from the apostle's quoting a part of this psalm, "That every mouth may be stopped," Rom. iii. 10—19. I own, indeed, that while the natural man looks on God as the Creator and Preserver of the world, because he loves his own self, therefore his heart rises not against the being of his Benefactor: but his enmity will quickly appear when he looks on God as the Governor and Judge of the world, binding him, under the pain of the curse, to exact holiness, and girding him with the cords of death, because of his sin. Listen in this case to the voice of the heart, and thou wilt find it to be, "No God." 2. Ye are enemies to the nature of God, Job xxi. 14, "They say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not

the knowledge of thy ways." Men set up to themselves an idol of their own fancy, instead of God, and then fall down and worship it. They love him no other way than Jacob loved Leah, while he took her for Rachel. Every natural man is an enemy to God, as he is revealed in his word. The infinitely holy, just, powerful, and true being, is not the God whom he loves, but the God whom he loathes. In fact, men naturally are haters of God, Rom. i. 30; if they could, they certainly would make him otherwise than what he is. For, consider it is a certain truth, that whatsoever is in God, is God; therefore his attributes or perfections are not any thing really distinct from himself. If God's attributes be not God himself, he is a compound being, and so not the first being, to say which is blasphemous; for the parts compounding, are before the compound itself; but he is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.

Now, upon this I would, for your conviction, propose to your conscience a few queries. 1. How stand your hearts affected towards the infinite purity and holiness of God? Conscience will give an answer to this, which the tongue will not speak out. If you be not partakers of his holiness you cannot be reconciled to it. The Pagans finding that they could not be like God in holiness, made their god's like themselves in filthiness; and thereby they shew what sort of a God the natural man would have. God is holy; can an unholy creature love his unspotted holiness? Nay, it is the righteous only that can "give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness," Psalm xcvii. 12. God is light; can creatures of darkness rejoice therein? Nay, "every one that doth evil hateth the light," John iii. 20. "For what communion hath light with darkness?" 2 Cor. vi. 14. 2. How stand your hearts affected to the justice of God? There is not a man, who is wedded to his lusts, as all the unregenerate are, but would be content, with the blood of his body, to blot that letter out of the name of God. Can the malefactor love his condemning judge? or an unjustified sinner, a just God? No, he cannot, Luke vii. 47, "To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little." Hence, as men cannot get the doctrine of his justice blotted out of the Bible, it is such an eye-sore to them, that they strive to blot it out of their minds: they ruin themselves by presuming on his mercy, while they are not careful to get a righteousness, wherein they may stand before his justice; but "say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil," Zeph. i. 12. 3. How stand you affected to the omniscience and omnipresence of God? Men naturally would rather have a blind idol, than the all-seeing God; therefore they do what they can, as Adam did, to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord. They no more love the

all-seeing, every-where present God, than the thief loves to have the judge witness to his evil deeds. If it could be carried by votes, God would be voted out of the world, and closed up in heaven; for the language of the carnal heart is, "The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth," Ezek. viii. 12. 4. How stand ye affected to the truth and veracity of God? There are but few in the world who can heartily subscribe to this sentence of the apostle, Rom. iii. 4, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." Nay, truly, there are many who, in effect, hope that God will not be true to his word. There are thousands who hear the gospel, that hope to be saved, and think all safe with them for eternity, who never had any experience of the new birth, nor do at all concern themselves in the question, Whether they are born again, or not? a question that is likely to wear out from among us at this day. Our Lord's words are plain and peremptory, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." What are such hopes, then, but real hopes that God—with profoundest reverence be it spoken—will recall his word, and that Christ will prove a false prophet? What else means the sinner, who, "when he heareth the words of the curse, blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart?" Deut. xxix. 19. 5. How stand you affected to the power of God? None but new creatures will love him for it, on a fair view thereof; though others may slavishly fear him upon account of it. There is not a natural man, but would contribute, to the utmost of his power, to the building of another tower of Babel, to hem it in. On these grounds I declare every unrenewed man an enemy to God.

(2.) You are enemies to the Son of God. That enmity to Christ is in your hearts, which would have made you join the husbandmen who killed the heir, and cast him out of the vineyard, if ye had been beset with their temptations, and no more restrained than they were. "Am I a dog?" you will say, that I should so treat my sweet Saviour? So did Hazael ask in another case; but when he had the temptation, he was a dog to do it. Many call Christ their dear Saviour, whose consciences can bear witness, that they never derived as much sweetness from him as from their sweet lusts, which are ten times dearer to them than their Saviour. He is no other way dear to them, than as they abuse his death and sufferings, for the peaceable enjoyment of their lusts; that they may live as they please in the world; and when they die, be kept out of hell. Alas! it is but a mistaken Christ that is sweet to you, whose souls loathe that Christ who is the "brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." It is with you as it was with the

carnal Jews, who delighted in him, while they mistook his errand into the world, fancying that he would be a temporal deliverer to them, Mal. iii. 1. But when he "sat as a refiner and purifier of silver," vers. 2, 3, and rejected them as reprobate silver, who thought to have had no small honour in the kingdom of the Messiah, his doctrine galled their consciences, and they had no rest till they imbrued their hands in his blood. To open your eyes in this point, which you are so averse to believe, I will lay before you the enmity of your hearts against Christ in all his offices.

First, Every unregenerate man is an enemy to Christ in his prophetical office. He is appointed of the Father the great Prophet and Teacher; but not upon the call of the world, who, in their natural state, would have unanimously voted against him: therefore, when he came, he was condemned as a seducer and blasphemer. For evidence of this enmity, I will instance two things.

Proof 1. Consider the entertainment which he meets with when he comes to teach souls inwardly by his Spirit. Men do what they can to stop their ears, like the deaf adder, that they may not hear his voice. They "always resist the Holy Ghost:" "They desire not the knowledge of his ways;" and therefore bid him "depart from them." The old calumny is often raised upon him on that occasion, John x. 20, "He is mad, why hear ye him?" Soul-exercise, raised by the spirit of bondage, is accounted, by many, nothing else but distraction, and melancholy fits; men thus blaspheming the Lord's work, because they themselves are beside themselves, and cannot judge of those matters.

Proof 2. Consider the entertainment which he meets with when he comes to teach men outwardly by his word.

His written word, the Bible, is slighted. Christ hath left it to us, as the book of our instruction, to shew us what way we must steer our course, if we would go to Immanuel's land. It is a lamp to light us through a dark world, to eternal light. And he hath enjoined us, to search it with that diligence wherewith men dig into mines for silver and gold, John v. 39. But, ah! how is this sacred treasure profaned by many! They ridicule that holy word, by which they must be judged at the last day; and will rather lose their souls than their jest, dressing up the conceits of their wanton wits in scripture phrases; in which they act as mad a part, as one would dig into a mine, to procure metal to melt, and pour down his own and his neighbour's throat.—Many exhaust their spirits in reading romances, and their minds pursue them, as the flame doth the dry stubble; while they have no heart for, nor relish to, the holy word; and therefore seldom take a Bible in their hands. What is

agreeable to the vanity of their minds, is pleasant and taking; but what recommends holiness to their unholy hearts, makes their spirits dull and flat. What pleasure they find in reading a profane ballad, or story-book, to whom the Bible is entirely tasteless! Many lay by their Bibles with their sabbath-day's clothes; and whatever use they have for their clothes, they have none for their Bibles, till the return of the Sabbath. Alas! the dust or the finery about your Bibles is a witness now, and will, at the last day, be a witness of the enmity of your hearts against Christ as a Prophet. Besides all this, among those who usually read the scripture, how few are there that read it as the word of the Lord to their souls, and keep up communion with him in it! They do not make his statues their counsellors, nor does their particular case send them to their Bibles. They are strangers to the solid comforts of the scriptures. And when they are dejected, it is something else than the word that revives them: as Ahab was cured of his sullen fit, by the obtaining of Naboth's vineyard for him.

Christ's word preached is despised. The entertainment which most of the world, to whom it has come, have always given it, is that which is mentioned, Matt. xxii. 5, "They made light of it;" and for his sake, they are despised whom he employs to preach it; whatever other face men put upon their contempt of the ministry. John xv. 20, 21, "The servant is not greater than the Lord: if they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake." That Levi was the son of *the hated*, seems not to have been without a mystery, which the world in all ages hath unriddled. But though the earthen vessels, wherein God has put the treasure, be turned, with many, into vessels wherein there is no pleasure, yet why is the treasure itself slighted? But slighted it is, and that with a witness, this day. "Lord, who hath believed our report? To whom shall we speak?" Men can, without remorse, make to themselves silent Sabbaths, one after another. And, alas! when they come to ordinances for the most part, it is but *to appear*, or as the word is, *to be seen* before the Lord; and to *tread his courts*, namely, as a company of beasts would do, if they were driven into them, Isa. i. 12, so little reverence and awe of God appear on their spirits. Many stand like brazen walls before the word, in whose corrupt conversation the preaching of the word makes no breach. Nay, not a few are growing worse and worse, under "precept upon precept;" and the result of all is, "They go and fall backward, and are broken, and snared, and taken," Isa. xxviii. 13. What tears of blood are sufficient to lament that the gospel of

"the grace of God," is thus "received in vain!" Ministers are but the voice of one crying; the speaker is in heavan; and speaks to you from heaven by men: why do you "refuse him that speaketh?" Heb. xii. 25. God has made our master Christ, heir of all things, and we are sent to seek for a spouse for him. There is none so worthy as he; none more unworthy than they to whom this match is proposed; but the prince of darkness is preferred before the Prince of Peace. A dismal darkness overclouded the world by Adam's fall, more terrible than as if the sun, moon, and stars had been for ever wrapt up in blackness of darkness; and there we should have eternally lain, had not this grace of the gospel, as a shining sun, appeared to dispel it, Tit. ii. 11. But yet we fly like night-owls from it; and, like the wild beasts, lay ourselves down in our dens: when the sun ariseth, we are struck blind with the light thereof; and, as creatures of darkness, love darkness rather than light. Such is the enmity of the hearts of men against Christ, in his prophetical office.

Secondly, The natural man is an enemy to Christ in his priestly office. He is appointed of the Father a priest for ever; that, by his alone sacrifice and intercession, sinners may have peace with, and access to God, but Christ crucified is a stumbling-block, and foolishness to the unrenewed part of mankind, to whom he is preached, 1 Cor. i. 23. They are not for him as the "new and living way;" nor is he, by the voice of the world, "an High-priest over the house of God." Corrupt nature goes quite another way to work.

Proof 1. None of Adam's children are naturally inclined to receive the blessing in borrowed robes; but would always, according to the spider's motto, "owe all to themselves:" and so climb up to heaven on a thread spun for themselves. For they "desire to be under the law," Gal. iv. 21, and "go about to establish their own righteousness," Rom. x. 3. Man naturally looks on God as a great master; and himself as his servant, that must work and win heaven as his wages. Hence, when conscience is awakened, he thinks that, to the end he may be saved, he must answer the demands of the law, serve God as well as he can, and pray for mercy wherein he comes short. And thus many come to duties, that never come out of them to Jesus Christ.

Proof 2. As men naturally think highly of their duties, that seem to them to be well done, so they look for acceptance with God, according as their work is done, not according to the share they have in the blood of Christ. "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?" They value themselves on their performances and attainments; yea, their very opinions in religion, Phil. iii. 4—

7, taking to themselves what they rob from Christ the great High-priest.

Proof 3. The natural man, going to God in duties, will always be found either to go without a Mediator, or with more than the one only Mediator, Jesus Christ. Nature is blind, and therefore venturesome; it sets men agoing immediately to God without Christ; to rush into his presence, and put their petitions in his hand, without being introduced by the Secretary of heaven, or putting their requests into his hand. So fixed is this disposition in the unrenewed heart, that when many hearers of the gospel are conversed with upon the point of their hopes of salvation, the name of Christ will scarcely be heard from their mouths. Ask them how they think to obtain the pardon of sin? they will tell you they beg and look for mercy, because God is a merciful God; and that is all they have to confide in. Others look for mercy for Christ's sake: but how do they know that Christ will take their plea in hand? Why, as the papists have their mediators with the Mediator, so have they. They know he cannot but do it; for they pray, confess, mourn, and have great desires, and the like; and so have something of their own to commend them unto him: they were never made poor in spirit, and brought empty-handed to Christ, to lay the stress of all on his atoning blood.

Thirdly, The natural man is an enemy to Christ in his kingly office. The Father hath appointed the Mediator, "King in Zion," Psalm ii. 6. All to whom the gospel comes are commanded, on their highest peril, "to kiss the Son," and submit themselves unto him, verse 12. But the natural voice of mankind is, "Away with him;" as you may see, verse 2, 3, "They will not have him to reign over them," Luke xix. 14.

Proof 1. The workings of corrupt nature would wrest the government out of his hands. No sooner was he born, but, being born a King, Herod persecuted him, Matt. ii. And when he was crucified, they "set up over his head his accusation written, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews," Matt. xxvii. 37. Though his kingdom be a spiritual kingdom, and not of this world, yet they cannot allow him a kingdom within a kingdom, which acknowledgeth no other head or supreme but the Royal Mediator. They make bold with his royal prerogatives, changing his laws, institutions, and ordinances; modelling his worship according to the devices of their own hearts, introducing new offices and officers into his kingdom, not to be found in "the book of the manner of his kingdom;" disposing of the external government thereof, as may best suit their carnal designs. Such is the enmity of the hearts of men against Zion's King.

Proof 2. How unwilling are men, naturally, to submit unto, and be hedged in by, the laws and discipline of his kingdom! As a king, he is a lawgiver, Isaiah xxxiii. 22, and has appointed an external government, discipline, and censures, to control the unruly, and to keep his professed subjects in order, to be exercised by officers of his own appointment, Matt. xviii. 17, 18; 1 Cor. xii. 28; 1 Tim. v. 17; Heb. xiii. 17. But these are the great eye-sores of the carnal world, who love sinful liberty, and therefore cry out, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us," Psalm ii. 3. Hence this work is found to be, in a special manner, a striving against the stream of corrupt nature, which, for the most part, puts such a face on the church, as if there were no king in Israel, every one doing that which is right in his own eyes.

Proof 3. However natural men may be brought to feign submission to the King of saints, yet lusts always retain the throne and dominion in their hearts, and they are serving divers lusts and pleasures, Titus iii. 3. None, but those in whom Christ is formed, do really put the crown on his head, and receive the kingdom of Christ within them. His crown is "the crown wherewith his mother crowned him on the day of his espousals." Who are they, whom the power of grace has not subdued, that will not allow him to set up, and to put down, in their souls, as he will? Nay, as for others, any lord shall sooner get the rule over them, than the Lord of glory: they kindly entertain his enemies, but will never absolutely resign themselves to his government, till conquered in a day of power. Thus you may see, that the natural man is an enemy to Jesus Christ in all his offices.

But O how hard it is to convince men in this point! They are very loath to believe. And, in a special manner, the enmity of the heart against Christ in his priestly office seems to be hid from the view of most of the hearers of the gospel. There appears to be a peculiar malignity in corrupt nature against this office of his. It may be observed, that the Socinians, those enemies of our blessed Lord, allow him to be properly a Prophet and a King, but deny him to be properly a Priest. And this is agreeable enough to the corruption of our nature: for, under the covenant of works, the Lord was known as a Prophet or Teacher, and also as a King or Ruler; but not at all as a Priest: so man knows nothing of the mystery of Christ, as the way to the Father, till it is revealed to him: and when it is revealed, the will riseth up against it; for corrupt nature is opposed to the mystery of Christ, and the great contrivance of salvation, through the crucified Saviour, revealed in the gospel. For clearing of which weighty truth, let these four things be considered:—

[1.] The soul's falling in with the grand scheme of salvation by Jesus Christ, and setting the matters of salvation on that footing before the Lord, is declared by the Scriptures of truth to be an undoubted mark of a real saint, who is happy here, and shall be happy hereafter, Matt. xi. 6, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." 1 Cor. i. 23, 24, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Phil. iii. 3, "For we are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Now, how could this be, if nature could comply with that grand device?

[2.] Corrupt nature is the very reverse of the gospel plan. In the gospel, God proposes Jesus Christ as the great means of re-uniting man to himself; he has named him as the Mediator, one in whom he is well pleased, and will have none but him, Matt. xvii. 5; but nature will have none of him, Psalm lxxi. 11. God appointed the place of meeting for the reconciliation, namely, the flesh of Christ; accordingly, God was in Christ, 2 Cor. v. 19, as the tabernacle of meeting, to make up the peace with sinners: but natural men, although they should die for ever, will not come to Christ, John v. 50, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." In the way of the gospel, the sinner must stand before the Lord in an imputed righteousness: but corrupt nature is for an inherent righteousness; and, therefore, so far as natural men follow after righteousness they follow after "the law of righteousness," Rom. ix. 31, 32; and not after "the Lord our righteousness." Nature is always for building up itself, and to have some ground for boasting; but the great design of the gospel is to exalt grace, to depress nature, and exclude boasting, Rom. iii. 27. The sum of our natural religion is, to do good from and for ourselves, John v. 44; the sum of the gospel religion is, to deny ourselves, and to do good from and for Christ, Phil. i. 21.

[3.] Every thing in nature is against believing in Jesus Christ. What beauty can the blind man discern in a crucified Saviour, for which he is to be desired? How can the will, naturally impotent, yea, and averse to good, make choice of him? Well may the soul then say to him in the day of the spiritual siege, as the Jebusite said to David in another case, "Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither," 2 Sam. v. 6. The way of nature is to go into oneself for all; according to the fundamental maxim of unsanctified morality, "That a man should trust in himself;" which, according to the doctrine of faith, is mere fool-

ishness: for so it is determined, Prov. xxviii. 26, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." Now faith is the soul's going out of itself for all: and this nature, on the other hand, determines to be foolishness, 1 Cor. i. 18—23. Wherefore there is need of the working of mighty power to cause sinners to believe, Eph. i. 19; Isa. liii. 1. We see the promises of welcome to sinners, in the gospel-covenant, are ample, large, and free, clogged with no conditions, Isa. lv. 1; Rev. xxii. 17.—If they cannot believe his bare word, he has given his oath upon it, Ezek. xxxiii. 11; and, for their greater assurance, he has annexed seals to his sworn covenant, namely, the holy sacraments: so that no more could be demanded of the most faithless person in the world, to make us believe him, than the Lord hath condescended to give us, to make us believe himself. This plainly speaks nature to be against believing; and those who flee to Christ for a refuge, to have need of strong consolation, Heb. vi. 18, to balance their strong doubts, and propensity to unbelief. Farther, also, it may be observed, how in the word sent to a secure, graceless generation, their objections are answered beforehand; and words of grace are heaped one upon another, as you may read, Isa. lv. 7—9; Joel ii. 13. Why? Because the Lord knows, that when these secure sinners are thoroughly awakened, doubts, fears, and carnal reasonings against believing, will be getting into their breasts, as thick as dust in a house, raised by sweeping a dry floor.

[4.] Corrupt nature is bent towards the way of the law, or covenant of works; and every natural man, so far as he sets himself to seek after salvation, is engaged in that way; and will not quit it, till beat from it by divine power. Now the way of salvation by works, and that of free grace in Jesus Christ, are inconsistent. Rom. xi. 6, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." Gal. iii. 12, "And the law is not of faith; but the man that doth them shall live in them." Wherefore, if the will of man naturally incline to the way of salvation by the law, it lies cross to the gospel plan. And that such is the natural bent of our hearts, will appear, if these following things be considered:

First, The law was Adam's covenant; and he knew no other, as he was the head and representative of all mankind, that were brought into it with him, and left under it by him, though without strength to perform the condition thereof. Hence, this covenant is interwoven with our nature; and though we have lost our father's strength, yet we still incline to the way he was set upon, as our head and representative in that covenant; that is, by doing, to live.

This is our natural religion, and the principle which men naturally take for granted, Matth. xix. 16, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?"

Secondly, Consider the opposition that has always been made in the world, against the doctrine of free grace in Jesus Christ, by men setting up for the way of works; thereby discovering the natural tendency of the heart. It is manifest, that the great design of the gospel plan is to exalt the free grace of God in Jesus Christ, Rom. iv. 16, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace."—See Eph. i. 6, and chap. ii. 7—9. All gospel truths centre in Christ: so that to learn the truth, is to learn Christ, Eph. iv. 20, and to be truly taught it, is to be taught as "the truth is in Jesus," verse 21. All dispensations of grace and favour from heaven, whether to nations or particular persons, have still had something about them proclaiming the freedom of grace; as in the very first separation made by the divine favour, Cain, the elder brother is rejected, and Abel, the younger, accepted. This shines through the whole history of the Bible: but, as true it is, this has been the point principally opposed by corrupt nature. One may well say, that, of all errors in religion, since Christ the seed of the woman was preached, this of works, in opposition to free grace in him, was the first that lived, and, it is likely, will be the last that dies. There have been vast numbers of errors, which have sprung up, one after another; whereof, at length, the world became ashamed and weary, so that they died away: but this has continued, from Cain, the first author of this heresy, unto this day; and never wanted some that clave to it, even in the times of greatest light. I do not, without ground, call Cain the author of it; who, when Abel brought a sacrifice of atonement, a bloody offering of the firstlings of his flock, like the publican smiting on his breast, and saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," advanced with his thank-offering of the fruit of the ground, Gen. iv. 3, 4, like the proud Pharisee with his "God, I thank thee," &c. For what was the cause of Cain's wrath, and of his murdering Abel? was it not that he was not accepted of God for his work? Gen. iv. 4, 5. "And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous," 1 John iii. 12; that is, done in faith, and accepted, when his were done without faith, and rejected, as the apostle teacheth, Heb. xi. 4. So he wrote his indignation against justification and acceptance with God through faith, in opposition to works, in the blood of his brother, to convey it down to posterity. And, since that time, the unbloody sacrifice has often swimmed in the blood of those that rejected it.—The promise made to Abraham, of the seed in which all nations should be blessed, was

so overclouded among his posterity in Egypt, that the generality of them saw no need of that way of obtaining the blessing, till God himself confuted their error by a fiery law from Mount Sinai, which "was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come," Gal. iii. 19. I need not insist on telling you, how Moses and the prophets had still much to do, to lead the people off from the conceit of their own righteousness. The ninth chapter of Deuteronomy is entirely spent on that purpose. They were very gross in that point in our Saviour's time, in the time of the apostles, when the doctrine of free grace was most clearly preached, that error lifted up its head in the face of the clearest light; witness the epistles to the Romans and Galatians. And since that time it has not been wanting; Popery being the common sink of former heresies, and the heart and life of that delusion. And, finally, it may be observed, that always as the church declined from her purity otherwise, the doctrine of free grace was obscured proportionably.

Thirdly, Such is the natural propensity of man's heart to the way of the law, in opposition to Christ, that, as the tainted vessel turns the taste of the purest liquor put into it, so the natural man turns the very gospel into law, and transforms the covenant of grace into a covenant of works. The ceremonial law was to the Jews a real gospel; which held blood, death, and translation of guilt, before their eyes continually, as the only way of salvation; yet their very table, that is, their altar, with the several ordinances pertaining thereto, Mal. i. 12, was a snare unto them, Rom. xi. 9, while they used it to make up the defects in their obedience to the moral law; and clave to it so, as to reject him, whom the altar and sacrifices pointed them to, as the subject of all; even as Hagar, whose duty was only to serve was, by their father, brought into her mistress's bed; not without a mystery in the purpose of God, "for these are the two covenants," Gal. iv. 24. Thus is the doctrine of the gospel corrupted by papists, and other enemies to the doctrine of free grace. And indeed, however natural men's heads may be set right in this point, as surely as they are out of Christ, their faith, repentance, and obedience, such as they are, are placed by them in the room of Christ and his righteousness; and so trusted to, as if by these they fulfilled a new law.

Fourthly, Great is the difficulty, in Adam's sons, of their parting with the law as a covenant of works. None part with it, in that respect, but those whom the power of the Spirit of grace separates from it. The law is our first husband, and gets every one's virgin love. When Christ comes to the soul, he finds it married to the law, so as it neither can nor will be married to another, till it

be obliged to part with the first husband, as the apostle teaches, Rom. vii. 1—4. Now, that you may see what sort of a parting this is, consider,

First, It is death, Rom. vii. 4; Gal. ii. 19. Entreaties will not prevail with the soul here; it saith to the first husband, as Ruth to Naomi, "The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." And here sinners are true to their word; they die to the law, before they are married to Christ. Death is hard to every body; but what difficulty, do you imagine, must a loving wife, on her deathbed, find in parting with her husband, the husband of her youth, and with the dear children she has brought forth to him? The law is that husband; all the duties performed by the natural man are these children. What a struggle, as for life, will be in the heart before they are parted? I may have occasion to touch upon this afterwards; in the mean time, take the apostle's short but pithy description of it, Rom. x. 3, "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." They go about to establish their own righteousness, like an eager disputant in schools, seeking to establish the point in question; or, like a tormentor, extorting a confession from one upon the rack. They go about to establish it, to make it stand: their righteousness is like a house built on the sand; it cannot stand, but they would have it to stand: it falls, they set it up again; but still it tumbles down on them; yet they cease not to go about to make it stand. But wherefore all this pains about a tottering righteousness? Because, such as it is, it is their own. What sets them against Christ's righteousness? Why, that would make them free grace's debtors for all; and that is what the proud heart can by no means submit to. Here lies the stress of the matter, Psalm x. 4, "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek," to read it without the supplement, in other terms, it means, "He cannot dig, and to beg he is ashamed." Such is the struggle before the soul dies to the law. But what speaks yet more of this woful disposition of the heart, nature oft-times gets the mastery of the disease: insomuch that the soul, which was like to have died to the law while convictions were sharp and piercing, fatally recovers of the happy and promising sickness; and, what is natural, cleaves more closely than ever to the law, even as a wife brought back from the gates of death, would cleave to her husband. This is the issue of the exercises of many about their souls' case; they are indeed brought to follow duties more closely; but they are as far from Christ as ever, if not farther.

Secondly, It is a violent death, Rom. vii. 4, "Ye are become dead to the law," being killed, slain, or put to death, as the word bears. The law itself has a great hand in this; the husband gives the wound, Gal. ii. 19, "I through the law am dead to the law." The soul that dies this death, is like a loving wife matched with a rigorous husband; she does what she can to please him, yet he is never pleased, but harrases and beats her till she breaks her heart, and death sets her free: this will afterwards more fully appear. Thus it is made evident, that men's hearts are naturally bent to the way of the law, and lie cross to the gospel method: and the second article of the charge against you that are unregenerate is verified, namely, that you are enemies to the Son of God.

(3.) You are enemies to the spirit of God. He is the Spirit of holiness: the natural man is unholy, and loves to be so, and therefore resists the Holy Ghost, Acts vii. 51. The work of the Spirit is to convince the world of "sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," John xvi. 8. But O, how do men strive to ward off these convictions, as much as they ward off a blow, threatening the loss of a right eye, or a right hand; If the Spirit of the Lord dart them in, so that they cannot avoid them; the heart says, in effect, as Ahab to Elijah, whom he both hated and feared, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" And indeed they treat him as an enemy, doing their utmost to stifle convictions, and to murder these harbingers that come to prepare the Lord's way into the soul. Some fill their hands with business, to put their convictions out of their heads, as Cain, who set about building a city; some put them off with delays and fair promises, as Felix did; some will sport them away in company, and some sleep them away. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of sanctification; whose work it is to subdue lusts, and and burn up corruption: how then can the natural man, whose lusts are to him as his limbs, yea, as his life, fail of being an enemy to him?

(4.) You are enemies to the law of God. Though the natural man desires to be under the law, as a covenant of works, choosing that way of salvation, in opposition to the mystery of Christ; yet as it is a rule of life to him, requiring universal holiness, and forbidding all manner of impurity, he is an enemy to it; "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be," Rom. viii. 7. For, 1. There is no unrenewed man, who is not wedded to some one lust or another, which his heart can by no means part with. Now that he cannot bring up his inclinations to the holy law, he would fain have the law brought down to his inclinations: a plain evidence of the enmity of the heart against it. Therefore, "to delight in the

law of God after the inward man," is proposed in the word as a mark of a gracious soul, Rom. vii. 22; Psalm i. 2. It is from this natural enmity of the heart against the law, that all the pharisaical glosses upon it have arisen; whereby the commandment, which is in itself exceeding broad, has been made very narrow, to the intent that it might be the more agreeable to the natural disposition of the heart. 2. The law, laid home on the natural conscience in its spirituality, irritates corruption. The nearer it comes, nature rises the higher against it. In that case it is as oil to the fire, which instead of quenching it, makes it flame the more: "When the commandment came, sin revived," says the apostle, Rom. vii. 9. What reason can be assigned for this, but the natural enmity of the heart against the holy law? Unmortified corruption, the more it is opposed, the more it rages. Let us conclude then, that the unregenerate are heart-enemies to God, his Son, his Spirit, and his law; that there is a natural contrariety, opposition, and enmity in the will of man to God himself, and his holy will.

5. There is in the will of man contumacy against the Lord. Man's will is naturally wilful in an evil course; he will have his will, though it should ruin him: it is with him, as with the leviathan, Job xli. 29, "Darts are counted as stubble; he laugheth at the shaking of a spear." The Lord calls to him by his word; says to him, as Paul to the jailor, when he was about to kill himself, "Do thyself no harm:" sinner, "why will you die?" Ezek. xviii. 31. But they will not hearken; every one turneth to his course, "as the horse rusheth into the battle," Jer. viii. 6. We have a promise of life, in form of a command, Prov. iv. 4, "Keep my commandments, and live:" it speaks impenitent sinners to be self-destroyers, wilful self-murderers. They transgress the command of living; as if one's servant should wilfully starve himself to death, or greedily drink a cup of poison, which his master commands him to forbear: even so do they; they will not live, they will die, Prov. viii. 36, "All they that hate me, love death."—O what a heart is this! It is a stony heart, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, hard and inflexible as a stone: mercies melt it not, judgments break it not; yet it will break ere it bend. It is an insensible heart: though there be upon the sinner a weight of sin, which makes the earth to stagger; although there is a weight of that wrath on him, which makes the devils to tremble; yet he goes lightly under the burden; he feels not the weight any more than a stone would, till the Spirit of the Lord quickens him so far as to feel it.

6. The unrenewed will is wholly perverse, in reference to man's chief and highest end. The natural man's chief end is not God, but

himself. The being of man is merely relative, dependent, borrowed: he has neither being nor goodness originally from himself; but all he has is from his God, as the first cause and spring of all perfection, natural or moral: dependence is woven into his very nature: so that if God were totally to withdraw from him, he would dwindle into a mere nothing. Seeing then whatever man is, he is of him, surely in whatever he is, he should be to him, as the waters which came from the sea, do of course return thither again. Thus man was created, directly looking to God, as his chief end: but, falling into sin, he fell off from God, and turned into himself; and, like a traitor usurping the throne, he gathers in the rents of the crown to himself. This infers a total apostasy and universal corruption in man; for where the chief and last end is changed, there can be no goodness there. This is the case of all men in their natural state, Psalm xiv. 2, 3, "The Lord looked down—to see if there were any that did—seek God. They are all gone aside" from God; they seek not God, but themselves. Though many fair shreds of morality are to be found amongst them, yet "there is none that doth good, no, not one;" for though some of them in appearance run well, yet they are still off the way; they never aim at the right mark. They are "lovers of their own selves," 2 Tim. iii. 2, "more than God," ver. 4. Wherefore Jesus Christ, having come into the world to bring men back to God again, came to bring them out of themselves in the first place, Matt. xvi. 24. The godly groan under this woful disposition of the heart: they acknowledge it, and set themselves against it, in its subtile and dangerous insinuations. The unregenerate, though most insensible of it, are under the power thereof; and whithersoever they turn themselves, they cannot move beyond the circle of self: they seek themselves, they act for themselves; their natural, civil, and religious actions, from whatever springs they come, all run into, and meet in the dead sea of self.

Most men are so far from making God their chief end, in their natural and civil actions, that in these matters, God is not in all their thoughts. Their eating and drinking, and such like natural actions, are for themselves; their own pleasure or necessity, without any higher end, Zech. vii. 6, "Did ye not eat for yourselves?" They have no eye to the glory of God in these things, as they ought to have, 1 Cor. x. 31. They do not eat and drink to keep up their bodies for the Lord's service; they do them not because God has said, "Thou shalt not kill;" neither do those drops of sweetness, which God has put into the creature, raise up their souls towards that ocean of delights that is in the Creator; though they be a sign

hung out at heaven's door, to tell men of the fulness of goodness that is in God himself, Acts xiv. 17. But it is self, and not God, that is sought in them, by natural men. And what are the unrenewed man's civil actions, such as buying, selling, working, &c., but fruit to himself? Hos. x. 1. So marrying, and giving in marriage, are reckoned amongst the sins of the old world, Matt. xxiv. 38: for they have no eye to God therein, to please him; but all they had in view was to please themselves, Gen. vi. 3. Finally, self is natural men's highest end, in their religious actions. They perform duties for a name, Matt. vi. 1, 2, or some other worldly interest, John vi. 26. Or if they be more refined, it is their peace, and at most their salvation from hell and wrath, or their own eternal happiness, that is their chief and highest end, Matt. xix. 16—22. Their eyes are held, that they see not the glory of God. They seek God indeed, yet not for himself, but for themselves. They seek him not at all, but for their own welfare: so their whole life is woven into one web of practical blasphemy; making God the means, and self their end; yea, their chief end.

Thus I have given you a rude draught of man's will, in his natural state, drawn by scripture, and men's own experience. Call it no more Naomi, but Marah; for bitter it is, and a root of bitterness. Call it no more free-will, but slavish lust; free to evil, but free from good, till regenerating grace loosens the bands of wickedness. Now, since all must be wrong, and nothing can be right, where the understanding and will are so corrupt; I shall briefly despatch what remains, as following, of course, on the corruption of these prime faculties of the soul.

III. *The Corruption of the Affections.*

The *affections* are corrupted. The unrenewed man's affections are wholly disordered and distempered: they are as the unruly horse, that either will not receive, or violently runs away with, the rider. So man's heart naturally is a mother of abominations, Mark vii. 21, 22, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness," &c. The natural man's affections are wretchedly misplaced; he is a spiritual monster. His heart is, where his feet should be, fixed on the earth; his heels are lifted up against heaven, which his heart should be set on, Acts ix. 5. His face is towards hell, his back towards heaven; and therefore God calls to him to turn. He loves what he should hate, and hates what he should love; joys in what he ought to mourn for, and mourns for what he should rejoice in; glories in his shame, and is ashamed of his glory; abhors what he should desire, and desires what he should abhor, Prov. ii. 13—15. They hit

the point indeed, as Caiaphas did in another case, who cried out against the apostles, as men that turned the world upside down, Acts xvii. 6; for that is the work which the gospel has to do in the world, where sin has put all things so out of order, that heaven lies under, and earth a-top. If the unrenewed man's affections be set on lawful objects, then they are either excessive or defective. Lawful enjoyments of the world have sometimes too little, but mostly too much of them; either they get not their due, or, if they do, it is measure pressed down, and running over. Spiritual things have always too little of them. In a word, they are never right; only evil.

Now, here is a threefold cord against heaven and holiness, not easily to be broken; a blind mind, a perverse will, and disorderly distempered affections. The mind, swelled with self-conceit, says, the man should not stoop; the will, opposite to the will of God, says, he will not; and the corrupt affections, rising against the Lord, in defence of the corrupt will, say, he shall not. Thus the poor creature stands out against God and goodness, till a day of power comes, in which he is made a new creature.

IV. *Corruption of the Conscience.*

The *conscience* is corrupt and defiled, Titus i. 15. It is an evil eye, that fills one's conversation with much darkness and confusion; being naturally unable to do its office: till the Lord, by letting in new light to the soul, awakens the conscience, it remains sleepy and inactive. Conscience can never do its work, but according to the light it has to work by. Wherefore, seeing the natural man cannot spiritually discern spiritual things, 1 Cor. ii. 14, the conscience naturally is quite useless in that point; being cast into such a deep sleep, that nothing but saving illumination from the Lord can set it on work in that matter. The light of the natural conscience in good and evil, sin and duty, is very defective; therefore, though it may check for grosser sins, yet, to the more subtile workings of sin, it cannot check them, because it discerns them not. Thus, conscience will fly in the face of many, if at any time they be drunk, swear, neglect prayer, or be guilty of any gross sin; who otherwise have a profound peace, though they live in the sin of unbelief, and are strangers to spiritual worship, and the life of faith. Natural light being but faint and languishing in many things which it reaches, conscience, in that case, shoots like a stitch in one's side, which quickly goes off: its incitements to duty, and checks for, and struggles against sin, are very remiss, which the natural man easily gets over. But because there is a false light in the dark mind, the natural conscience following the same, will call evil good, and good evil, Isa. v.

20. So it is often found like a blind and furious horse, which violently runs down himself, his rider, and all that comes in his way. John xvi. 2, "Whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service." When the natural conscience is awakened by the Spirit of conviction, it will indeed rage and roar, and put the whole man in a dreadful consternation; awfully summon all the powers of the soul to help in a strait; make the stiff heart to tremble, and the knees to bow; set the eyes weeping, the tongue confessing; and oblige the man to cast out the goods into the sea, which he apprehends are likely to sink the ship of the soul, though the heart still goes after them. Yet it is an evil conscience which naturally leads to despair, and will do it effectually, as in Judas' case; unless either lusts prevail over it, to lull it asleep, as in the case of Felix, Acts xxiv. 25, or the blood of Christ prevail over it, sprinkling and purging it from dead works, as in the case of all true converts, Heb. ix. 14, and x. 22.

V. *Corruption of the Memory.*

Even the *memory* bears evident marks of this corruption. What is good and worthy to be remembered, as it makes but slender impression, so that impression easily wears off; the memory, as a leaking vessel, lets it slip, Heb. ii. 1. As a sieve that is full when in the water, lets all go when it is taken out, so is the memory with respect to spiritual things. But how does it retain what ought to be forgotten? Sinful things so bear in themselves upon it, that though men would fain have them out of mind, yet they stick there like glue. However forgetful men are in other things, it is hard to forget an injury. So the memory often furnishes new fuel to old lusts; makes men in old age re-act the sins of their youth, while it presents them again to the mind with delight, which thereupon returns to its former lusts. Thus it is like a riddle, that lets through the pure grain, and keeps the refuse. Thus far of the corruption of the soul.

VI. *Corruption of the Body.*

The *body* itself also is partaker of this corruption and defilement, so far as it is capable thereof. Wherefore the Scripture calls it sinful flesh, Rom. viii. 3. We may take this up in two things. 1. The natural temper, or rather distemper of the bodies of Adam's children, as it is an effect of original sin, so it has a natural tendency to sin, incites to sin, leads the soul into snares, yea, is itself

a snare to the soul. The body is a furious beast, of such a temper, that if it be not beat down, kept under, and brought into subjection, it will cast the soul into much sin and misery, 1 Cor. ix. 27. There is a vileness in the body, Phil. iii. 21, which, as to the saints, will never be removed, until it be melted down in the grave, and cast into a new form at the resurrection, to come forth a spiritual body; and will never be carried off from the bodies of those who are not partakers of the resurrection to life. 2. It serves the soul in many sins. Its members are instruments or weapons of unrighteousness, whereby men fight against God, Rom. vi. 13. The eyes and ears are open doors, by which impure motions and sinful desires enter the soul: the tongue is "a world of iniquity," James iii. 6, "an unruly evil, full of deadly poison," ver. 8: by it the impure heart vents a great deal of its filthiness. "The throat is an open sepulchre," Rom. iii. 13. The feet run the devil's errands, ver. 15. The belly is made a god, Phil. iii. 19, not only by drunkards and riotous livers, but by every natural man, Zech. vii. 6. So the body naturally is an agent for the devil, and a magazine of armour against the Lord.

To conclude—man by nature is wholly corrupted: "From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in him." As in a dunghill every part contributes to the corruption of the whole, so the natural man, while in this state, grows still worse and worse: the soul is made worse by the body, and the body by the soul: and every faculty of the soul serves to corrupt another more and more. This much for the second general head.

III. I shall show how man's nature comes to be thus corrupted. The heathens perceived that man's nature was corrupted; but how sin had entered, they could not tell. But the Scripture is very plain on that point, Rom. v. 12, 19, "By one man sin entered into the world. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." Adam's sin corrupted man's nature, and leavened the whole lump of mankind. We putrefied as in Adam as our root. The root was poisoned, and so the branches were envenomed: the vine turned into the vine of Sodom, and so the grapes became grapes of gall. Adam, by his sin, became not only guilty, but corrupt; and so transmits guilt and corruption to his posterity, Gen. v. 3; Job xiv. 4. By his sin he stripped himself of his original righteousness, and corrupted himself; we were in him representatively, being represented by him as our moral head in the covenant of works: we were in him seminally, as our natural head; hence we fell in him, and by his disobedience were made sinners, as Levi, in the loins of Abraham, paid tithes, Heb. vii. 9, 10. His first sin is imputed to us;

therefore we are justly left under the want of his original righteousness, which being given to him as a common person, he cast off by his sin: and this is necessarily followed, in him and us, by the corruption of the whole nature; righteousness and corruption being two contraries, one of which must needs always be in man, as a subject capable thereof. And Adam, our common father, being corrupt, we are so too; for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?"

Although it is sufficient to prove the righteousness of this dispensation, that it was from the Lord, who doeth all things well; yet, to silence the murmurings of proud nature, let these few things farther be considered. 1. In the covenant wherein Adam represented us, eternal happiness was promised to him and his posterity, upon condition of his, that is, Adam's perfect obedience, as the representative of all mankind: whereas, if there had been no covenant, they could not have pleaded eternal life upon their most perfect obedience, but might have been, after all, reduced to nothing; notwithstanding, by natural justice, they would have been liable to God's eternal wrath, in case of sin. Who in that case would not have consented to that representation? 2. Adam had a power to stand given him, being made upright. He was as capable of standing for himself and all his posterity, as any after him could be for themselves. This trial of mankind in their head would soon have been over, and the crown for them all, had he stood: whereas, had his posterity been independent of him, and every one left to act for himself, the trial would have been continually carrying on, as men came into the world. 3. He had the strongest natural affection to engage him, being our common father. 4. His own stock was in the ship, his all lay at stake, as well as ours. He had no separate interest from ours; but if he forget ours, he must necessarily forget his own. 5. If he had stood, we should have had the light of his mind, the righteousness of his will, and holiness of his affections, with entire purity, transmitted unto us; we could not have fallen; the crown of glory, by his obedience, would have been for ever secured to him and his. This is evident from the nature of a federal representation, and no reason can be given why, seeing we are lost by Adam's sin, we should not have been saved by his obedience. On the other hand, it is reasonable, that he falling, we should with him bear the loss. 6. Those who quarrel with this dispensation, must renounce their part in Christ; for we are no otherwise made sinners by Adam, than we are made righteous by Christ, from whom we have both imputed and inherent righteousness. We no more made choice of the second Adam for our head and representative in the

second covenant, than we did of the first Adam in the first covenant.

Let none wonder that such a horrible change could be brought on by one sin of our first parents; for thereby they turned away from God, as their chief end, which necessarily infers a universal depravation. Their sin was a complication of evils, a total apostasy from God, a violation of the whole law: by it they broke all the ten commands at once. 1. They chose new gods. They made their belly their god, by their sensuality: self their god, by their ambition; yea, and the devil their god, by believing him, and disbelieving their Maker. 2. Though they received, yet they observed not that ordinance of God about the forbidden fruit. They contemned that ordinance so plainly enjoined them, and would needs carve out to themselves how to serve the Lord. 3. They took the name of the Lord their God in vain; despising his attributes, his justice, truth, power, &c. They grossly profaned the sacramental tree; abused his word, by not giving credit to it; abused that creature of his which they should not have touched; and violently misconstrued his providence, as if God, by forbidding them that tree, had been standing in the way of their happiness; therefore he suffered them not to escape his righteous judgment. 4. They remembered not the Sabbath to keep it holy, but put themselves out of a condition to serve God aright on his own day; neither kept they that state of holy rest wherein God had put them. 5. They cast off their relative duties; Eve forgets herself, and acts without the advice of her husband, to the ruin of both; Adam, instead of admonishing her to repent, yields to the temptation, and confirms her in her wickedness. They forgot all duty to their posterity. They honoured not their Father in heaven; and therefore their days were not long in the land which the Lord their God gave them. 6. They ruined themselves, and all their posterity. 7. Gave themselves up to luxury and sensuality. 8. Took away what was not their own, against the express will of the great Owner. 9. They bore false witness, and lied against the Lord, before angels, devils, and one another; in effect giving out, that they were hardly dealt by, and that Heaven grudged their happiness. 10. They were discontented with their lot, and coveted an evil covetousness to their house; which ruined both them and theirs. Thus was the image of God on man defaced all at once.

IV. I shall now apply this Doctrine of the Corruption of Nature.

Use I. For information. Is man's nature wholly corrupted? Then,

1. No wonder that the grave opens its devouring mouth for us, as

soon as the womb has cast us forth; and that the cradle is turned into a coffin, to receive the corrupt lump: for we are all, in a spiritual sense, dead-born; yea, and filthy, Psalm xiv. 3, noisome, rank, and stinking as a corrupt thing, as the word imports. Then let us not complain of the miseries we are exposed to at our entrance into, nor of the continuance of them while we are in the world. Here is the venom that has poisoned all the springs of earthly enjoyments we have to drink of. It is the corruption of man's nature that brings forth all the miseries of human life, in churches, states, and families, and in men's souls and bodies.

2. Behold here, as in a glass, the spring of all the wickedness, profanity, and formality, which is in the world; the source of all the disorders in thy own heart and life. Every thing acts like itself, agreeable to its own nature; and so corrupt man acts corruptly. You need not wonder at the sinfulness of your own heart and life, nor at the sinfulness and perverseness of others; if a man be crooked, he cannot but halt; and if the clock be set wrong, how can it point the hour aright?

3. See here, why sin is so pleasant, and religion such a burden to carnal spirits: sin is natural, holiness not so. Oxen cannot feed in the sea, nor fishes in the fruitful fields. A swine brought into a palace would soon get away again, to wallow in the mire; and corrupt nature tends ever to impurity.

4. Learn from this the nature and necessity of regeneration. *First*, This discovers the nature of regeneration, in these two things: 1. It is not a partial, but a total change, though imperfect in this life. Thy whole nature is corrupted; therefore the cure must go through every part. Regeneration makes not only a new head, for knowledge, but a new heart, and new affections, for holiness—"All things become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. If a man, having received many wounds, should be cured of them all, save one only, he might bleed to death by that one as well as by a thousand: so, if the change go not through the whole man, it is naught. 2. It is not a change made by human industry, but by the mighty power of the Spirit of God. A man must be born of the Spirit, John iii. 5. Accidental diseases may be cured by men; but those which are natural, not without a miracle, John ix. 32. The change wrought upon men by good education, or forced upon them by a natural conscience, though it may pass among men for a saving change, yet it is not so; for our nature is corrupt, and none but the God of nature can change it. Though a gardener, by ingrafting a pear branch into an apple tree, may make the apple tree bear pears, yet the art of man cannot change the nature of the apple tree: so a man may fix

a new life to his old heart, but he can never change the heart. *Secondly*, This also shews the necessity of regeneration. It is absolutely necessary, in order to salvation, John iii. 4, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." No unclean thing can enter the New Jerusalem; but thou art wholly unclean, while in thy natural state. If every member of thy body were disjointed, each joint must be loosened before the members can be set right again. This is the case of thy soul, as thou hast heard: therefore thou must be born again; otherwise thou shalt never see heaven, unless it be afar off, as the rich man in hell did. Deceive not thyself: no mercy of God, no blood of Christ, will bring thee to heaven in thy unregenerate state: for God will never open a fountain of mercy to wash away his own holiness and truth; nor did Christ shed his precious blood, to blot out the truths of God, or to overturn God's measures about the salvation of sinners. Heaven! What would you do there, you who are not born again? you who are no ways fitted for Christ the head? That would be a strange sight! a holy head, and members wholly corrupt! a head full of treasures of grace, and members wherein are no thing but treasures of wickedness! a head obedient to the death, and heels kicking against heaven! You are no better adapted for the society above, than beasts are for converse with men. Thou art a hater of true holiness; and at the first sight of a saint there, wouldst cry out—"Hast thou found me, O mine enemy!" Nay, the unrenewed man, if it were possible he could go to heaven in that state, would go to it no otherwise than now he comes to the duties of holiness; that is, leaving his heart behind him.

Use II. For lamentation. Well may we lament thy case, O natural man! for it is the saddest case one can be in out of hell. It is time to lament for thee; for thou art dead already, dead while thou livest: thou carriest about with thee a dead soul in a living body; and because thou art dead, thou canst not lament thy own case. Thou art loathsome in the sight of God; for thou art altogether corrupt; thou hast no good in thee. Thy soul is a mass of darkness, rebellion, and vileness, before the Lord. Thou thinkest, perhaps, that thou hast a good heart to God, good inclinations, and good desires: but God knows there is nothing good in thee: "Every imagination of thine heart is only evil continually." Thou canst do no good; thou canst do nothing but sin. For,

1. Thou art the servant of sin, Rom. vi. 17, and therefore free from righteousness, ver. 20. Whatever righteousness be, poor soul, thou art free from it; thou dost not, thou canst not meddle with it. Thou art under the dominion of sin; a dominion where righteousness

can have no place. Thou art a child and servant of the devil, seeing thou art yet in a state of nature, John viii. 44—"Ye are of your father the devil." And, to prevent any mistake, consider, that sin and Satan have two sort of servants: 1. There are some employed, as it were, in coarser work; those bear the devil's mark on their foreheads, having no form of godliness; but are profane, grossly ignorant, mere moralists, not so much as performing the external duties of religion, but living in the view of the world as sons of the earth, only attending to earthly things, Phil. iii. 19. 2. There are some employed in a more refined sort of service to sin, who carry the devil's mark in their right hand; which they can and do hide from the eyes of the world. These are close hypocrites, who sacrifice as much to the corrupt mind, as the others to the flesh, Eph. ii. 3. These are ruined by a more secret trade of sin: pride, unbelief, self-seeking, and the like, swarm in, and prey upon their corrupted, wholly corrupted souls. Both are servants of the same house; the latter as far as the former from righteousness.

2. How is it possible that thou shouldest be able to do any good, thou whose nature is wholly corrupt?—Can fruit grow where there is no root? or, Can there be an effect without a cause? "Can the fig-tree bear olive berries? either a vine, figs?" If thy nature be wholly corrupt, as indeed it is, all thou dost is certainly so too; for no effect can exceed the virtue of its cause. "Can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit?" Matth. vii. 18.

Ah! what a miserable spectacle is he that can do nothing but sin! Thou art the man, whoever thou art, that art yet in thy natural state. Hear, O sinner, what is thy case.

(1.) Innumerable sins compass thee about: mountains of guilt are lying upon thee; floods of impurities overwhelm thee, living lusts of all sorts roll up and down in the dead sea of thy soul, where no good can breathe, because of the corruption there. Thy lips are unclean; the opening of thy mouth is as the opening of an unripe grave, full of stench and rottenness, Rom. iii. 13, "Their throat is an open sepulchre." Thy natural actions are sin; for "when ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves and drink for yourselves?" Zech. vii. 6. Thy civil actions are sin, Prov. xxi. 4, "The ploughing of the wicked is sin." Thy religious actions are sin, Prov. xv. 8, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." The thoughts and imaginations of thy heart are only evil continually. A deed may be soon done, a word soon spoken, a thought swiftly pass through the heart; but each of these is an item in thy accounts. O sad reckoning! as many thoughts, words, and actions, so many sins. The longer thou livest, thy ac-

counts swell the more. Should a tear be dropt for every sin, thine head must be waters, and thine eyes a fountain of tears; for nothing but sin comes from thee. Thy heart frames nothing but evil imaginations: there is nothing in thy life but what is framed by thine heart; and, therefore, there is nothing in thy heart or life but evil.

(2.) All thy religion, if thou hast any, is lost labour, as to acceptance with God, or any saving effect on thyself. Art thou yet in thy natural state? Truly, then, thy duties are sins, as was just now hinted. Would not the best wine be loathsome in a vessel wherein there is no pleasure? So is the religion of an unregenerate man. Under the law, the garment which the flesh of the sacrifice was carried in, though it touched other things, did not make them holy: but he that was unclean touching any thing, whether common or sacred made it unclean. Even so thy duties cannot make thy corrupt soul holy, though they in themselves be good; but thy corrupt heart defiles them, and makes them unclean, Hag. ii. 12—14. Thou wast wont to divide thy works into two sorts; some good, some evil: but thou must count again, and put them all under one head: for God writes on them all "only evil." This is lamentable: it will be no wonder to see those beg in harvest, who fold their hands, and sleep in seed-time; but to be labouring with others in the spring, and yet have nothing to reap when the harvest comes, is a very sad case, and will be the case of all professors living and dying in their tural state.

(3.) Thou canst not help thyself. What canst thou do, to take away thy sin, who art wholly corrupt? Nothing, truly but sin. If a natual man begin to relent, drop a tear for his sin, and reform, presently the corrupt nature takes merit itself; he has done much himself, he thinks, and God cannot but do more for him on that account. In the mean time, he does nothing but sin: so that the fitness of the merit is, that the leper be put out of the camp, the dead soul buried out of sight, and the corrupt lump cast into the pit. How canst thou think to recover thyself by any thing which thou canst do? Will mud and filth wash out filthiness; and wilt thou purge out sin by sinning? "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one," Job xiv. 4. This is the case of thy corrupt soul; not to be recovered but by Jesus Christ. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help," Hos. xiii. 9. Thou art poor indeed, extremely "miserable and poor," Rev. iii. 17. Thou hast no shelter, but a refuge of lies; no garment for thy soul, but filthy rags; nothing to nourish it,

but husks that cannot satisfy. And more than this, thou didst get such a bruise in the loins of Adam, as is not yet cured, so that thou art without strength, as well as ungodly, Rom. v. 6; unable to do, or work for thyself; nay, more than all this, thou canst not so much as think aright, but art lying helpless, as an infant exposed in the open field, Ezek. xvi. 5.

Use III. I exhort you to believe this sad truth. Alas! it is evident that it is very little believed in the world. Few are concerned to get their corrupt conversation changed; but fewer, by far, to get their nature changed. Most men know not what they are, nor what spirits they are of; they are as the eye, which, seeing many things, never sees itself. But until you know every one the plague of his own heart, there is no hope of your recovery. Why will you not believe it? You have plain Scripture testimony for it; but you are loath to entertain such an ill opinion of yourselves. Alas! this is the nature of your disease, Rev. iii. 17, "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Lord, open their eyes to see it, before they die of it, and in hell lift up their eyes, and see what they will not see now.

I shall close this weighty point, of the corruption of man's nature, with a few words as to another doctrine from the text.

God's specially noticing our Natural Corruption.

Doctrine—God takes special notice of our natural corruption, or the sin of our nature. This he testifies two ways: 1. By his word, as in the text,—"God saw that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually;" see Psalm xiv. 2, 3. 2. By his works. God marks his particular notice of it, and displeasure with it, as in many of his works, so especially in these two.

1. In the death of the infant children of men. Many miseries they have been exposed to: they were drowned in the deluge, consumed in Sodom by fire and brimstone; they have been slain with the sword, dashed against the stones, and are still dying ordinary deaths.—What is the true cause of this? On what ground does a holy God thus pursue them? Is it the sin of their parents? That may be the occasion of the Lord's raising the process against them; but it must be their own sin that is the ground of the sentence passing on them: for "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," saith God, Ezek. xviii. 4. Is it their own actual sin? They have none.—But as men do with serpents, which they kill at first sight, before they have done any hurt, because of their venomous nature; so it is in this case.

2. In the birth of the elect children of God.—When the Lord is about to change their nature, he makes the sin of their nature lie heavy on their spirits. When he means to let out their corruption, the lance goes deep into their souls, reaching to the root of sin, Rom. vii. 7—9. The flesh, or corruption of nature, is pierced, being crucified, as well as the affections and lusts, Gal. v. 24.

Use. Let us then have a special eye upon the corruption and sin of our nature. God sees it: O that we saw it too, and that sin were ever before us! What avails it to notice other sins, while this mother-sin is not noticed? Turn your eyes inward to the sin of your nature. It is to be feared, that many have this work to begin yet; that they have shut the door, while the grand thief is yet in the house undiscovered. This is a weighty point; and in handling of it, I shall notice these four heads:

Men overlooking their Natural Sin.

1. I shall, for conviction, point at some evidences of men's overlooking the sin of their nature, which yet the Lord takes particular notice of. 1. Men's looking on themselves with such confidence, as if they were in no hazard of gross sins. Many would take it very unkindly to get such a caution as Christ gave his apostles, Luke xxi. 34, "Take heed of surfeiting and drunkenness." If any should suppose them to break out in gross abominations, each would be ready to say, "Am I a dog?" It would raise the pride of their hearts, but not their fear and trembling, because they know not the corruption of their nature. 2. Want of tenderness towards those that fall. Many, in that case, cast off all feelings of Christian compassion, for they do not consider themselves, lest they also be tempted, Gal. vi. 1. Men's passions are often highest against the faults of others, when sin sleeps soundly in their own breasts. David, even when he was at his worst, was most violent against the faults of others. While his conscience was asleep under his own guilt, in the matter of Uriah, the Spirit of the Lord takes notice, that his anger was greatly kindled against the man in the parable, 2 Sam. xii. 5. And, on good grounds, it is thought it was at the same time that he treated the Ammonites so cruelly, as is related, ver. 31, "Putting them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and making them pass through the brick-kiln." Grace makes men zealous against sin in others, as well as in themselves: but eyes turned inward to the corruption of nature, clothe them with pity and compassion; and fill them with thankfulness to the Lord, that they themselves were not the persons left to be such

spectacles of human frailty. 3. There are not a few, who, if they be kept from afflictions in worldly things, and from gross outbreakings in their conversation, know not what it is to have a sad heart. If they meet with a cross, which their proud hearts cannot stoop to bear, they are ready to say, O to be gone! but the corruption of their nature never makes them long for heaven. Lusts, scandalously breaking out at a time, will mar their peace: but the sin of their nature never makes them a heavy heart. 4. Delaying of repentance, in hopes to set about it afterwards. Many have their own appointed time for repentance and reformation: as if they were such complete masters over their lusts, that they can allow them to gather more strength, and yet overcome them. They take up resolutions to amend, without an eye to Jesus Christ, union with him, and strength from him; a plain evidence that they are strangers to themselves; so they are left to themselves, and their flourishing resolutions wither; for, as they see not the necessity, so they get not the benefit, of the dew from heaven to water them. 5. Men's venturing freely on temptations, and promising liberally in their own strength. They cast themselves fearlessly into temptation, in confidence of their coming off fairly: but, were they sensible of the corruption of their nature, they would be cautious of entering on the devil's ground; as one girt about with bags of gunpowder, would be unwilling to walk where sparks of fire are flying, lest he should be blown up. Self-jealousy well becomes Christians. "Lord, is it I?" They that know the deceit of their bow, will not be very confident that they shall hit the mark. 6. Ignorance of heart-plagues. The knowledge of the plagues of the heart is a rare qualification. There are indeed some of them written in such great characters, that he who runs may read them: but there are others more subtile, which few discern. How few are there, to whom the bias of the heart to unbelief is a burden? Nay, they perceive it not. Many have had sharp convictions of other sins, that were never to this day convinced of their unbelief; though that is the sin especially aimed at in a thorough conviction, John xvi. 8, 9, "He will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on me." A disposition to establish our own righteousness, is a weed that naturally grows in every man's heart; but few labour at the plucking of it up: it lurks undiscovered. The bias of the heart to the way of the covenant of works, is a hidden plague of the heart to many. All the difficulty they find is, in getting up their hearts to duties: they find no difficulty in getting their hearts off them, and over them to Jesus Christ. How hard it is to bring men off from their own righteousness! Yea, it is very hard to convince them of their lean-

ing to it at all. 7. Pride and self-conceit. A view of the corruption of nature would be very humbling, and oblige him that has it to reckon himself the chief of sinners. Under the greatest attainments and enlargements, it would be ballast to his heart, and hide pride from his eyes. The want of thorough humiliation, piercing to the sin of one's nature, is the ruin of many professors: for digging deep makes the great difference betwixt wise and foolish builders, Luke vi. 48, 49.

Original Sin to be specially noticed.

II. I will lay before you a few things, in which you should have a special eye to original sin. 1. Have a special eye to it, in your application to Jesus Christ. Do you find any need of Christ, which sends you to him as the Physician of souls? O forget not your disease when you are with the Physician. They never yet knew well their errand to Christ, who went not to him for the sin of their nature; for his blood to take away the guilt of it, and his Spirit to break the power of it. Though, in the bitterness of your souls, you should lay before him a catalogue of your sins of omission and commission, which might reach from earth to heaven: yet, if original sin were wanting in it, assure yourselves that you have forgot the best part of the errand which a poor sinner has to the Physician of souls. What would it have availed the people of Jericho, to have set before Elisha all the vessels in their city, full of the water that was naught, if they had not led him forth to the spring, to cast in salt there? 2 Kings ii. 19—21. The application is easy. 2. Have a special eye to it in your repentance, whether in its beginning or progress; in your first repentance, and in the renewing of your repentance afterwards. Though a man be sick, there is no fear of death, if the sickness strike not to his heart: and there is as little fear of the death of sin, as long as the sin of our nature is not touched. But if you would repent indeed, let the streams lead you up to the fountain; and mourn over your corrupt nature, as the cause of all sin, in heart, lip, and life, Psalm li. 4, 5, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.—Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." 3. Have a special eye upon it in your mortification, Gal. v. 24, "They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh." It is the root of bitterness that must be struck at; which the axe of mortification must be laid to, else we labour in vain. In vain do men go about to cleanse the stream, while they are at no pains about the muddy fountain: it is a vain religion to

attempt to make the life truly good, while the corruption of nature retains its ancient vigour, and the power of it is not broken. 4. You are to eye it in your daily walk. He that would walk aright, must have one eye upward to Jesus Christ, and another inward to to the corruption of his own nature. It is not enough that we look about us, we must also look within us. Where the wall is weakest; there our greatest enemy lies; and there are grounds for daily watching and mourning.

Why original Sin is to be especially noticed.

III. I shall offer some reasons, why we should especially notice the sin of our nature.

1. Because of all sins, it is the most extensive and diffusive. It goes through the whole man, and spoils all. Other sins mar particular parts of the image of God, but this at once defaces the whole. A disease affecting any particular member of the body is dangerous; but that which affects the whole, is worse. The corruption of nature is the poison of the old serpent cast into the fountain of action, which infects every action, and every breathing of the soul.

2. It is the cause of all particular lusts, and actual sins, in our hearts and lives. It is the spawn which the great leviathan has left in the souls of men, from whence comes all the fry of actual sins and abominations, Mark vii. 21, "Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries," &c. It is the bitter fountain: particular lusts are but rivulets running from it, which bring forth into the life a part only, and not the whole of what is within. The fountain is always above the stream: and where the water is good, it is best in the fountain; where it is bad, it is worst there. The corruption of nature being that which defiles all, it must needs be the most abominable thing.

3. It is virtually all sin: for it is the seed of all sins, which want but the occasion to set up their heads, being, in the corruption of nature as the effect in the virtue of its cause. Hence it is called "a body of death," Rom. vii. 24, as consisting of the several members belonging to such "a body of sins," Col. ii. 11, whose life lies in spiritual death. It is the cursed ground, fit to bring forth all manner of noxious weeds. As the whole nest of venemous creatures must needs be more dreadful than any few of them that come creeping forth; so the sin of thy nature, that mother of abominations, must be worse than any particular lust that appear stirring in thy heart and life. Never did every sin appear, in the conversa-

tion of the vilest wretch that ever lived; but look thou into thy corrupt nature, and there thou mayest see all and every sin, in the seed and root thereof. There is a fulness of all unrighteousness there, Rom. i. 29. There is atheism, idolatry, blasphemy, murder, adultery, and whatsoever is vile. Possibly none of these appear to thee in thy heart; but there is more in that unfathomable depth of wickedness than thou knowest. Thy corrupt heart is like an ant's nest, on which, while the stone lieth, none of them appear; but take off the stone, and stir them up but with the point of a straw, you will see what a swarm is there, and how lively they be. Just such a sight would thy heart afford thee, did the Lord but withdraw the restraint he has upon it, and suffer Satan to stir it up by temptation.

4. The sin of our nature is, of all sins, the most fixed and abiding. Sinful actions, though the guilt and stain of them may remain, yet in themselves they pass away. The drunkard is not always at his cups, nor the unclean person always acting lewdness: but the corruption of nature is an abiding sin; it remains with men in its full power, by night and by day; at all times fixed, as with bands of iron and brass, till their nature is changed by converting grace; and it remains even with the godly, until the death of the body, though not in its reigning power. Pride, envy, covetousness, and the like, are not always stirring in thee: but the proud, envious, carnal nature, is still with thee; even as the clock that is wrong is not always striking wrong, but the wrong set continues with it without intermission.

5. It is the reigning sin, Rom. vi. 12, "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in the lusts thereof." There are three things which you may observe in the corrupt heart: 1. There is in the corrupt nature the corrupt set of the heart, whereby men are unapt for all good, and fitted for all evil. This the apostle calls here "sin which reigns." 2. There are particular lusts, or dispositions of corrupt nature, which the apostle calls "the lusts thereof;" such as pride, covetousness. &c. 3. There is one among these, which is, like Saul among the people, higher by far than the rest, namely, "the sin which doth so easily beset us," Heb. xii. 1. This we usually call the "predominant sin," because it doth, as it were reign over other particular lusts; so that other lusts must yield to it. These three are like a river which divides itself into many streams, whereof one is greater than the rest: the corruption of nature is the river head, that has many particular lusts in which it runs; but it chiefly disburdens itself into what is commonly called one's predominant sin. No all

of these being fed by the sin of our nature, it is evident that it is the reigning sin, which never loses its superiority over particular lusts, which live and die with it, and by it. But, as in some rivers, the main stream runs not always in one and the same channel, so particular ruling sins may be changed, as lust in youth may be succeeded by covetousness in old age. Now, what does it avail to reform in other things, while the reigning sin remains in its full power? What though some particular lusts be broken? If sin, the sin of our nature, keep the throne, it will set up another in its stead; as when a water-course is stopped in one place, if the fountain is not closed up, it will stream forth another way. Thus some cast off their prodigality, but covetousness comes up in its stead; some cast away their profanity, and the corruption of nature sends not its main stream that way, as before, but it runs in another channel, namely, in that of a legal disposition, self-righteousness, or the like. So that people are ruined, by their not contemplating the sin of their nature.

6. It is an hereditary evil, Psalm li. 5, "In sin did my mother conceive me." Particular lusts are not so, but in the virtue of their cause. A prodigal father may have a frugal son; but this disease is necessarily propagated in nature, and therefore hardest to cure. Surely, then, the word should be given out against this sin, as against the king of Israel, 1 Kings xxii. 31, "Fight neither with small nor great, save only with this;" for this sin being broken, all other sins are broken with it; and while it stands entire, there is no victory.

How to get a View of the Corruption of Nature.

IV. That you may get a view of the corruption of your nature, I would recommend to you three things:—1. Study to know the spirituality and extent of the law of God, for that is the glass wherein you may see yourselves. 2. Observe your hearts at all times, but especially under temptation. Temptation is a fire that brings up the scum of the vile heart: carefully mark the first risings of corruption. 3. Go to God, through Jesus Christ, for illumination by his Spirit. Lay out your soul before the Lord, as willing to know the vileness of your nature: say unto him, "That which I know not, teach thou me." And be willing to take light in from the word. Believe, and you shall see. It is by the word the Spirit teacheth; but without the Spirit's teaching, all other teaching will be to little purpose. Though the gospel were to shine about you like the sun at noon-day, and this great truth were ever so plainly preached, you would never see yourselves aright, until the Spirit of the Lord light his candle within your breast: the fulness and glory

of Christ, and the corruption and vileness of our nature, are never rightly learned, but where the Spirit of Christ is the teacher.

To shut up this weighty point, let the consideration of what has been said, commend Christ to you all. You that are brought out of your natural state of corruption, unto Christ, be humble; still come to Christ, and improve your union with him, to the farther weakening of your natural corruption. Is your nature changed? It is but in part so. If you are cured, remember the cure is not yet perfected, you still go halting. Though it were better with you than it is, the remembrance of what you were by nature should keep you low. You that are yet in your natural state, take this with you: believe the corruption of your nature; and let Christ and his grace be precious in your eyes. O that you would at length be serious about the state of your souls! What do you intend to do? You must die; you must appear before the judgment-seat of God. Will you lie down and sleep another night at ease in this case? Do it not: for, before another day, you may be summoned before God's dreadful tribunal, in the grave-clothes of your corrupt state; and your vile souls be cast into the pit of destruction, as a corrupt lump, to be for ever buried out of God's sight. For I testify unto you all, there is no peace with God, no pardon, no heaven, for you, in your natural state: there is but a step between you and eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord; if the brittle thread of your life, which may break with a touch ere you are aware, be broken while you are in this state, you are ruined for ever, without remedy. But come speedily to Jesus Christ: he has cleansed souls as vile as yours; and he will yet "cleanse the blood that he has not cleansed," Joel iii. 21. Thus far of the sinfulness of man's natural state.

PART II.

THE MISERY OF MAN'S NATURAL STATE.

We were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
EPHESIANS ii. 3.

HAVING shewn you the sinfulness of man's natural state, I come now to lay before you the misery of it. A *sinful* state cannot but be a *miserable* state. If sin go before, wrath follows of course. Corruption and destruction are so knit together, that the Holy Ghost calls destruction, even eternal destruction, "corruption," Gal. vi. 8. He that

soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption," that is, everlasting destruction; as is clear from its being opposed to life everlasting, in the following clause. The apostle having shewn the Ephesians their real state by nature, namely, that they were dead in sins and trespasses, altogether corrupt; he tells them, in the words of the text, their relative state, namely, that the pit was dug for them, while in that state of corruption: being dead in sins, they "were by nature children of wrath, even as others."

In the words we have four things:

1. The misery of a natural state; it is a state of wrath, as well as a state of sin. "We were," says the apostle, "children of wrath," bound over and liable to the wrath of God; under wrath in some measure; and, in wrath, bound over to more, even the full measure of it, in hell, where the floods of it go over the prisoners for ever. Thus Saul, in his wrath, adjudging David to die, 1 Sam. xx. 31; and David, in his wrath, passing sentence of death against the man in the parable, 2 Sam. xii. 5, says, each of them, of his supposed criminal, "He shall surely die;" or, as the words in the first language are, "He is a son of death." So the natural man is "a child of wrath, a son of death." He is a malefactor, dead in law, lying in chains of guilt; a criminal, held fast in his fetters, till the day of execution; which will not fail to come, unless a pardon be obtained from his God, who is his judge and his opponent too. By that means, indeed, children of wrath may become children of the kingdom. The phrase in the text, however common in the holy language, is very significant. And as it is evident that the apostle, calling natural men the "children of disobedience," verse 2, means more than that they were disobedient children; for such may the Lord's own children be: so, to be children of wrath, is more than simply to be liable to, or under wrath. Jesus Christ was liable to, and under wrath; but I doubt whether we have any warrant to say he was a child of wrath.—The phrase seems to intimate, that men are, whatever they are in their natural state, under the wrath of God; that they are wholly under wrath: wrath is, as it were, woven into their very nature, and mixes itself with the whole of the man, who is, if I may so speak, a very lump of wrath, a child of hell, as the iron in the fire is all fire. For men naturally are children of wrath; come forth, so to speak, out of the womb of wrath; as Jonah's gourd was the "son of a night," which we render, "came up in a night," Jonah iv. 10; as if it had come out of the womb of the night, as we read of the "womb of the morning," Psalm cx. 3. Thus sparks of fire are called "sons of the burning coal," Job v. 7; Marg. Isa. xxi. 10, "O my thrashing, and the corn" or son "of my

floor," thrashed in the floor of wrath, and, as it were, brought forth by it. Thus the natural man is a "child of wrath;" it "comes into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones, Psalm cix. 18. For, though Judas was the only son of perdition amongst the apostles; yet all men, by nature, are of the same family.

2. Here is the rise of this misery; men have it by nature. They owe it to their nature, not to their substance or essence; for that neither is nor was sin, and therefore cannot make them children of wrath; though, for sin, it may be under wrath: not to their nature, as qualified at man's creation by his Maker; but to their nature, as vitiated and corrupted by the fall; to the vicious quality, or corruption of their nature, as before noticed, which is their principle of action, and, ceasing from action, the only principle in an unregenerate state. Now, by this nature, men are children of wrath; as, in time of pestilential infection, one draws in death with the disease then raging. Wherefore seeing, from our first being as children of Adam, we are corrupt children, shapen in iniquity, conceived in sin, we are also from that moment children of wrath.

3. The universality of this misery. All are by nature children of wrath, "we," says the apostle, "even as others;" Jews as well as Gentiles. Those that are now, by grace, the children of God were, by nature, in no better case than those that are still in their natural state.

4. Here is a glorious and happy change intimated, we *were* children of wrath, but are not so now; grace has brought us out of that state. This the apostle says of himself, and other believers. And thus, it well becomes the people of God to be often standing on the shore, and looking back to the Red Sea, or the state of wrath, which they were once weltering in, even as others.

Doctrine, The state of nature is a state of wrath.—Every one, in a natural unregenerate state, is in a state of wrath. We are born children of wrath; and continue so, until we be born again. Nay, as soon as we are children of Adam, we are children of wrath.

I shall introduce what I am to say on this point, with a few observations, as to the universality of this state of wrath, which may serve to prepare the way for the word into your consciences.

Wrath has gone as wide as ever sin went. When angels sinned, the wrath of God broke in upon them like a flood. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell," 2 Pet. ii. 4. It was thereby demonstrated, that no natural excellence in the creature can shield it from the wrath of God, if it once becomes a sinful creature. The finest and nicest piece of the workmanship of heaven, if once the Creator's image upon it be defaced by sin,

God can and will dash in pieces in his wrath, unless satisfaction be made to justice, and that image be restored; neither of which the sinner himself can do. Adam sinned; and the whole lump of mankind was leavened, and bound over to the fire of God's wrath. From the text you may learn, 1. That ignorance of this state, cannot free men from it. The Gentiles, that knew not God, "were by nature children of wrath, even as others." A man's house may be on fire, his wife and children perishing in the flames, while he knows nothing of it; and therefore is not concerned about it. Such is your case, O ye that are ignorant of these things! Wrath is silently sinking into your souls while you are blessing yourselves, saying,—"We shall have peace." You need not a more certain token that you are children, of wrath, than that you never saw yourselves such. You cannot be the children of God, who never yet saw yourselves the children of the devil. You cannot be in the way to heaven, who never saw yourselves by nature in the high road to hell. You are grossly ignorant of your state by nature; and so ignorant of God and of Christ, and your need of him, and though you look on your ignorance as a covert from wrath, yet take it out of the mouth of God himself, that it will ruin you if it be not removed: Isa. xxvii. 11, "It is a people of no understanding:—therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them." See also 2 Thess. i. 8; Hos. iv. 6. 2. No outward privileges can exempt men from this state of wrath, for the Jews, the children of the kingdom, God's peculiar people, were "children of wrath, even as others." Though you be church members, partakers of all church privileges; though you be descended of godly parents, of great and honourable families; be what you will, you are by nature heirs of hell, children of wrath. 3. No profession, no attainments in a profession of religion, do or can exempt men from this state of wrath. Paul was one of the strictest set of the Jewish religion, Acts xxvi. 5, yet a child of wrath, even as others, till he was converted. The close hypocrite, and the profane, are alike as to their state, however different their conversation be; and they will be alike in their fatal end, Psalm cxxv. 5, "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity." 4. Young ones, who are but setting out in the world, have not that to do to make themselves children of wrath, by following the graceless multitude: they are children of wrath by nature; so it is done already. They were born heirs of hell; and they will indeed make themselves more so, if they do not, while they are young, flee from that wrath to which they are born, by fleeing to Jesus Christ. 5. Whatever men are now by grace, they were even as others by nature. This

may be a sad meditation to them that have been at ease from their youth, and have had no changes.

Now these things being premised, I shall, in the first place, shew what this state of wrath is; secondly, confirm the doctrine; and, thirdly, apply it.

I. I am to shew what the state of wrath is. But who can fully describe the wrath of an angry God? None can do it. Yet so much of it may be discovered, as may serve to convince men of the absolute necessity of fleeing to Jesus Christ, out of that state of wrath. Anger, in men, is a passion and commotion of the spirit, for an injury received; with a desire to resent the same. When it comes to a height, and is fixed in one's spirit, it is called wrath. Now there are no passions in God, properly speaking: they are inconsistent with his absolute unchangeableness, and independency: therefore Paul and Barnabas, to remove the mistake of the Lycaonians, who thought they were gods, tell them, "they were men of like passions with themselves," Acts xiv. 15. Wrath, when it is attributed to God, must not be considered in respect of the affection of wrath, but the effects thereof. Wrath is a fire in the affections of men: tormenting the man himself: but there is no perturbation in God. His wrath does not in the least mar that infinite repose and happiness which he hath in himself. It is a most pure and undisturbed act of his will, producing dreadful effects against the sinner. It is little that we know of the infinite God; but, condescending to our weakness, he is pleased to speak of himself to us after the manner of men. Let us therefore notice man's wrath, but remove every thing in our consideration of the wrath of God, that implies imperfection; and so we may attain to some view of it however scanty. By this means we are led to consider the wrath of God against the natural man in these three particulars.

1. There is wrath in the heart of God against him. The Lord approves him not, but is displeased with him. Every natural man lies under the displeasure of God; and that is heavier than mountains of brass. Although he be pleased with himself, and others be pleased with him too, yet God looks down on him displeased.

1. His person is under God's displeasure; "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity," Psalm v. 5. A godly man's sin is displeasing to God, yet his person is still "accepted in the Beloved," Eph. i. 6 But "God is angry with the wicked every day," Psalm vii. 11. There is a fire of wrath burns continually against him in the heart of God. They are as dogs and swine, most abominable creatures in the sight of God. Though their natural state be gilded over with a shining profession, yet they are abhorred of God; and are

to him as smoke in his nose, Isa. lxv. 5, and lukewarm water, to be spewed out of his mouth, Rev. iii. 16; whited sepulchres, Matt. xxiii. 27; a generation of vipers, Matt. xii. 34; and a people of his wrath, Isa. x. 6. 2. He is displeased with all they do: it is impossible for them to please him, being unbelivers, Heb. xi. 6. He hates their persons; and so hath no pleasure in, but is displeased with their best works, Isa. lxvi. 3, "he that sacrificeth a lamb, is as if he cut off a dog's neck," &c. Their duty as done by them, is "an abomination to the Lord," Prov. xv. 8. And as men turn their back on those with whom they are angry, so when the Lord refuses communion with the natural man in his duties, it is a plain indication of his wrath.

2. There is wrath in the word of God against him. When wrath is in the heart, it seeks a vent by the lips: so God fights against the natural man with the sword of his mouth, Rev. ii. 16. The Lord's word never speaks good of him, but always curseth and condemneth him. Hence it is, that when he is awakened, the word read or preached often increases his horror. 1. It condemns all his actions, together with his corrupt nature. There is nothing he does, but the law declares it to be sin. It is a rule of perfect obedience, from which he always, in all things, declines; and so it rejects every thing he doth, as sinful. It pronounces his doom, and denounces God's curse against him, Gal. iii. 10. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." However well in the world, it pronounces a wo from heaven against him, Isa. iii. 11. The Bible is a quiver filled with arrows of wrath against him, ready to be poured in on his soul. God's threatenings, in his word, hang over his head as a black cloud, ready to shower down on him every moment. The word is indeed the saint's security against wrath: but it binds the natural man's sin and wrath together, as a certain pledge of his ruin, if he continue in that state. So the conscience being awakened, and perceiving this tie made by the law, the man is filled with terrors in his soul.

3. There is wrath in the hand of God, against the natural man. He is under heavy strokes of wrath already, and is liable to more.

(1.) There is wrath on his body. It is a piece of cursed clay, which wrath is sinking into by virtue of the threatening of the first covenant, Gen. ii. 17, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." There is not a disease or pain that affects him, but it comes on him with the sting of God's indignation in it. They are all cords of death, sent before to bind the prisoner.

(2.) There is wrath upon his soul. 1. He can have no communion with God; he is "foolish, and shall not stand in God's sight," Psalm v. 5. When Adam sinned, God turned him out of paradise: and natural men are, as Adam left them, banished from the gracious presence of the Lord; and can have no access to him in that state. There is war between heaven and them; and so all commerce is cut off. "They are without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12. The sun is gone down on them, and there is not the least glimpse of favour towards them from heaven. 2. Hence the soul is left to pine away in its iniquity: the natural darkness of their minds, the averseness to good in their wills, the disorder of their affections, and distemper of their consciences, and all their natural plagues, are left upon them in a penal way; and, being so left increase daily. God casts a portion of this world's goods to them, more or less, as a bone is thrown to a dog: but alas! his wrath against them appears, in that they get no grace. The Physician of souls comes by them, and goes by them, and cures others on each side of them, while they are consuming away in their iniquity, and ripening daily for utter destruction. 3. They lie open to fearful additional plagues on their souls, even in this life. Sometimes they meet with deadening strokes, silent blows from the hand of an angry God; arrows of wrath, that enter into their souls without noise, Isa. vi. 10, "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes," &c. God strives with them for a while, and convictions enter their consciences; but they rebel against the light; and by a secret judgment, they receive a blow on the head; so that, from that time, they do as it were live and rot above ground. Their hearts are deadened; their affections withered; their consciences stupified; and their whole souls blasted; "cast forth as a branch, and withered," John xv. 6. They are plagued with judicial blindness. They shut their eyes against the light; and they are given over to the devil, the god of this world, to be blinded more, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Yea, "God sends them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie," 2 Thess. ii. 11. Even conscience, like a false light on the shore, leads them upon rocks: by which they are broken in pieces. They harden themselves against God, and he leaves them to Satan and their own hearts, whereby they are hardened more and more. They are often "given up unto vile affections," Rom. i. 26. The reins are laid on their necks; and they are left to run into all excess, as their furious lusts drive them. Sometimes they meet with sharp fiery strokes, whereby their souls become like mount Sinai, where nothing is seen but fire and smoke; nothing heard but the thunder

of God's wrath, and the voice of the trumpet of a broken law, waxing louder and louder: which makes them, like Pashur, Jer. xx. 4, "a terror to themselves." God takes the filthy garments of their sins, which they were wont to sleep in securely; overlays them with brimstone, and sets them on fire about their ears: so they have a hell within them.

(3.) There is wrath on the natural man's enjoyments. Whatever be wanting in his house, there is one thing that is never wanting there, Prov. iii. 33, "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked." Wrath is on all that he has, on the bread that he eats, the liquor he drinks, the clothes which he wears. "His basket and store are cursed," Deut. xxviii. 17. Some things fall wrong with him; and that comes to pass by virtue of this wrath: other things go according to his wish, and there is wrath in that too; for it is a snare to his soul, Prov. i. 32. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them." This wrath turns his blessings into curses, Mal. ii. 2, "I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already." The holy law is "a killing letter to him," 2 Cor. iii. 6. The ministry of the gospel "a savour of death unto death," chap. ii. 16. In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, "he eateth and drinketh damnation to himself," 1 Cor. xi. 29. Nay, more than all that, Christ himself is to him a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence," 1 Pet. ii. 8. Thus wrath follows the natural man, as his shadow doth his body.

(4.) He is under the power of Satan, Acts xxiv. 18. The devil has overcome him, so he is his by conquest, his lawful captive Isa. xlix. 24. The natural man is condemned already, John iii. 18, and therefore under the heavy hand of "him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil." He keeps his prisoners in the prison of a natural state, bound hand and foot, Isa. lxi. 1, laden with divers lusts, as chains wherewith he holds them fast. Thou needest not, as many do, call on the devil to take thee; for he has a fast hold of thee already, as a child of wrath.

(5.) The natural man hath no security for a moment's safety, from the wrath of God coming on him to the uttermost. The curse of the law, denounced against him, has already tied him to the stake: so that the arrows of justice may pierce his soul; and, in him, may meet all the miseries and plagues that flow from the avenging wrath of God. See how he is set as a mark to the arrows of wrath, Psalm vii. 11—13, "God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready; he hath also prepared for him the instruments of death." Does he lie down to sleep? There is not a promise

that he knows of, or can know, to secure him that he shall not be in hell ere he awake. Justice pursues, and cries for vengeance on the sinner; the law casts the fire-balls of its curses continually upon him; wasted and long-tired patience is that which keeps in his life. He walks amidst enemies armed against him: his name may be Magor-missabib, that is, terror round about, Jer. xx. 3. Angels, devils, men, beasts, stones, heaven and earth, are in readiness, on a word of command from the Lord, to ruin him.

Thus the natural man lives, but he must die too; and death is a dreadful messenger to him. It comes upon him armed with wrath, and puts three sad charges in his hand. 1. Death charges him to bid an eternal farewell to all things in this world; to leave it, and haste away to another world. Ah, what a dreadful charge must this be to a child of wrath! He can have no comfort from heaven, for God is his enemy: as for the things of the world, and the enjoyment of his lusts, which were the only springs of his comfort, these are in a moment dried up to him for ever. He is not ready for another world: he was not thinking of removing so soon: or, if he was, yet he has no portion secured to him in the other world, but that which he was born to, and was increasing all his days, namely, a treasure of wrath. But go he must; his clay god, the world, must be parted with, and what has he more? There was never a glimmering of light, or favour from heaven, to his soul: the wrath which hung in the threatening, as a cloud like a man's hand, is darkening the whole heaven above him: if he "look unto the earth," from whence all his light was wont to come, "behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and he shall be driven to darkness;" Isa. viii. 22. 2. Death charges soul and body to part, till the great day. His soul is required of him, Luke xii. 20. O what a miserable parting must this be to a child of wrath! Care was indeed taken to provide for the body things necessary for this life; but, alas! there is nothing laid up for another life, nothing to be a seed of a glorious resurrection; as it lived, so it must die, and rise again, sinful flesh, fuel for the fire of God's wrath. As for the soul, he was never solicitous to provide for it. It lay in the body, dead to God, and all things truly good; and so must be carried out into the pit, in the grave-clothes of its natural state; for now that death comes, the companions in sin must part. 3. Death charges the soul to appear before the tribunal of God, while the body lies to be carried to the grave, Eccl. xii. 7, "The spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Heb. ix. 27, "It is appointed unto all men once to die, but after this the judgment." Well were it for the sinful soul, if it might be buried together with the body. But that

cannot be; it must go, and receive its sentence; and shall be shut up in the prison of hell, while the cursed body lies imprisoned in the grave, till the day of the general judgment.

When the end of the world, as appointed of God, is come, the trumpet shall sound, and the dead arise. Then shall the weary earth, at the command of the Judge, cast forth the bodies, the cursed bodies, of those that lived and died in their natural state; "The sea, death, and hell, shall deliver up their dead," Rev. xx. 13. Their miserable bodies and souls shall be reunited, and they summoned before the tribunal of Christ. Then shall they receive that fearful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," Matt. xxv. 41. Whereupon "they shall go away into everlasting punishment," ver. 46. They shall be eternally shut up in hell, never to get the least drop of comfort, nor the smallest alleviation of their torment. There they will be punished with the punishment of loss, being excommunicated for ever from the presence of God, his angels, and saints. All means of grace, all hopes of a delivery, will be for ever cut off from their eyes. They shall not have a drop of water to cool their tongues, Luke xvi. 24, 25. They will be punished with a punishment of sense. They must not only depart from God, but depart into fire; into everlasting fire! There the worm that shall gnaw them will never die; the fire that will scorch them, shall never be quenched. God will, through eternity, hold them up with the one hand, and pour the full vials of wrath into them with the other.

This is that state of wrath natural men live in; being under much of the wrath of God, and liable to more. But, for a further view of it, let us consider the qualities of this wrath: 1. It is irresistible, there is no standing before it; "Who may stand in thy sight, when once thou art angry?" Psalm lxxvi. 7. Can the worm or the moth defend itself against him that designs to crush it? Can the worm man stand before an angry God? Foolish man indeed practically bids a defiance to Heaven; but the Lord often, even in this world, opens such sluices of wrath upon them, as all their might cannot stop: they are carried away thereby, as with a flood! How much more will it be so in hell! 2. It is insupportable. What a man cannot resist, he will try to endure: but, Who shall dwell in devouring fire? Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings? God's wrath is a weight that will sink men into the lowest hell. It is a burden which no man can stand under. "A wounded spirit who can bear?" Prov. xviii. 14. 3. It is unavoidable to such as go on impenitently, and die in their sinful course. "He that, being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy," Prov. xxix. 1. We may now

flee from it, indeed, by fleeing to Jesus Christ: but such as flee from Christ, will never be able to avoid it. Whither can men flee from the avenging God? Where will they find a shelter? The hills will not hear them. The mountains will be deaf to their loudest supplications, when they cry to them to "hide them from the wrath of the Lamb." 4. It is powerful and fierce wrath, Psalm xc. 11, "Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath." We are apt to fear the wrath of man more than we ought; but no man can apprehend the wrath of God to be more dreadful than it really is: the power of it can never be known to the utmost; for it is infinite, and, properly speaking, has no utmost. How fierce soever it be, either on earth or in hell, God can still carry it farther. Every thing in God is most perfect in its kind; and therefore no wrath is so fierce as his. O sinner! how wilt thou be able to endure that wrath, which will tear thee in pieces, Psalm l. 22, and grind thee to powder! Luke xx. 18. The history of the two she-bears, that tare the children of Bethel, is an awful one, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24. But the united force of the rage of lions, leopards, and she-bears bereaved of their whelps, is not sufficient to give us even a faint view of the power of the wrath of God: Hos. xiii. 7, 8, "Therefore I will be unto them as a lion; as a leopard by the way will I observe them. I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart," &c. 5. It is penetrating and piercing wrath. It is burning wrath, and fiery indignation. There is no pain more exquisite than that which is caused by fire; and no fire so piercing as the fire of God's indignation, that burns unto the lowest hell, Deut. xxxii. 22. The arrows of men's wrath can pierce flesh, blood, and bones, but cannot reach the soul; but the wrath of God will sink into the soul, and so pierce a man in the most tender part, like as, when a person is thunderstruck, oft-times there is not a wound to be seen in the skin; yet life is gone, and the bones are melted, as it were: so God's wrath can penetrate into, and melt a man's soul within him, when his earthly comforts stand about him entire and untouched; as in Belshazzar's case, Dan. v. 6. 6. It is constant wrath, running parallel with the man's continuance in an unregenerate state; constantly attending him from the womb to the grave. There are few days so dark, but the sun sometimes looketh out from under the clouds: but the wrath of God is an abiding cloud on the objects of it, John iii. 36, "The wrath of God abideth on him" that believeth not. 7. It is eternal. O, miserable soul! if thou flee not from this wrath unto Jesus Christ, though thy misery had a beginning, yet it will never have an end. Should devouring death wholly

swallow thee up, and for ever hold thee fast in the grave, it would be kind: but thy body must be re-united to thy immortal soul, and live again, and never die; that thou mayest be ever dying, in the hands of the living God. Cold death will quench the flame of man's wrath against us, if nothing else do: but God's wrath, when it has come on the sinner for millions of ages, will still be the wrath to come, Matt. iii. 7; 1 Thess. i. 10; as the water of a river is still coming, how much soever has passed. While God is, he will pursue the quarrel. 8. However dreadful it is, and though it be eternal, yet it is most just wrath: it is a clear fire, without the least smoke of injustice. The sea of wrath, raging with greatest fury against the sinner, is clear as crystal. The Judge of all the earth can do no wrong: he knows no transports of passion, for they are inconsistent with the perfection of his nature. "Is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man) God forbid: for then, how shall God judge the world?" Rom. iii. 5, 6.

II. I shall confirm the doctrine of the State of Wrath. Consider, 1. How peremptory the threatening of the first covenant is: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 17. Hereby sin and punishment being connected, the veracity of God makes the execution of the threatening certain. Now, all men being by nature under this covenant, the breach of it lays them under the curse. 2. The justice of God requires that a child of sin be a child of wrath; that the law being broken, the sanction thereof should take place. God, as man's ruler and judge, cannot but do right, Gen. xviii. 25. Now, it is "a righteous thing with God to recompense sin" with wrath, 2 Thess. i. 6. He "is of purer eyes than to behold evil," Hab. i. 13. And "he hates all the workers of iniquity," Psalm v. 5. 3. The horrors of a natural conscience prove this. Conscience, in the breasts of men, tells them that they are sinners, and therefore liable to the wrath of God. Let men, at any time, soberly commune with themselves, and they will find that they have the witness in themselves, "knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death," Rom. i. 32. 4. The pangs of the new birth, the work of the Spirit on elect souls, in order to their conversion, demonstrate this. Hereby their natural sinfulness and misery, as liable to the wrath of God, are plainly taught them, filling their hearts with fear of that wrath. As it is the Spirit's work to "convince of sin, righteousness, and judgment," John xvi. 8, this testimony must needs be true; for the Spirit of truth cannot witness an untruth. But true believers, being freed from the state of wrath, "receive not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but receive the Spirit of adoption,"

Rom. viii. 15. Therefore, if fears of that nature do arise, after the soul's union with Christ, they come from the saint's own spirit, or from a worse. 5. The sufferings of Christ plainly prove this doctrine. Wherefore was the Son of God a son under wrath, but because the children of men were children of wrath? He suffered the wrath of God; not for himself, but for those who were liable to it in their own persons. Nay, this not only shews us to have been liable to wrath, but also that wrath must have a vent, in the punishment of sin. If this was done in the green tree, what will become of the dry? What a miserable case must a sinner be in, that is out of Christ; that is not vitally united to Christ, and partakes not of his Spirit! God, who spared not his own Son, surely will not spare such a one.

But the unregenerate man, who has no great value for the honour of God, will be apt to rise up against this Judge, and in his own heart condemn his procedure. Nevertheless, the Judge being infinitely just, the sentence must be righteous. Therefore, to stop thy mouth, O proud sinner! and to still thy clamour against thy righteous Judge, consider, 1. Thou art a sinner by nature; and it is highly reasonable, that guilt and wrath be as old as sin. Why should not God begin to vindicate his honour, as soon as vile worms attempt to impair it? Why shall not a serpent bite the thief, as soon as he leaps over the hedge? Why should not the threatening take hold of the sinner, as soon as he casts away the command? The poisonous nature of the serpent affords a man sufficient ground to kill it, as soon as ever he can reach it; and by this time thou mayest be convinced that thy nature is a very compound of enmity against God. 2. Thou hast not only enmity against God in thy nature, but hast discovered it by actual sins, which are, in his eye, acts of hostility. Thou hast brought forth thy lusts into the field of battle against thy sovereign Lord. And because thou art such a criminal, thy condemnation is just: for, besides the sin of thy nature, thou hast done that against Heaven, which if thou hadst done against men, thy life must have gone for it; and shall not wrath from Heaven overtake thee? 1. Thou art guilty of high treason and rebellion against the King of heaven. The thought and wish of thy heart, which he knows as well as the language of thy mouth, has been, "No God," Psalm xiv. 1. Thou hast rejected his government, blown the trumpet, and set up the standard of rebellion against him, being one of those that say, "We will not have this man to reign over us," Luke xix. 14. Thou hast striven against, and quenched his Spirit; practically disowned his laws proclaimed by his messengers; stopped thine ears at their voice, and sent them away mourning for thy

pride. Thou hast conspired with his grand enemy, the devil. Although thou art a servant of the King of glory, daily receiving of his favours, and living on his bounty, thou art holding a correspondence, and hast contracted a friendship, with his greatest enemy, and art acting for him against thy Lord; for "the lusts of the devil you will do," John viii. 44. 2. Thou art a murderer before the Lord. Thou hast laid the stumbling-block of thine iniquity before the blind world, and hast ruined the souls of others by thy sinful course. Though thou dost not see now, the time may come when thou shalt see the blood of thy relations, neighbours, acquaintances, and others upon thy head, Matth. xviii. 7. "Woe unto the world because of offences—Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." Yea, thou art a self-murderer before God: Prov. viii. 36, "He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me, love death." Ezek. xviii. 31, "Why will ye die?" The laws of men mark the self-murderer; what wonder is it, that the law of God is so severe against soul-murderers? Is it strange, that they who will needs depart from God now, cost what it will, should be forced to depart from him at last, into everlasting fire? But, what is yet more criminal, thou art guilty of the murder of the Son of God; for the Lord will reckon thee amongst those that pierced him, Rev. i. 6. Thou hast rejected him, as the Jews did; and by rejecting him, thou hast justified their deed. They indeed did not acknowledge him to be the Son of God, but thou dost. What they did against him, was in his state of humiliation; but thou hast acted against him, in his state of exaltation. These things will aggravate thy condemnation. What wonder then, if the voice of the lamb change to the roaring of the lion, against the traitor and murderer!

Objection. But some will say, "Is there not a vast disproportion between our sin, and that wrath you talk of?" I answer, "No; God punisheth no more than the sinner deserves." To rectify your mistake in this matter, consider, 1. The vast rewards which God has annexed to obedience. His word is no more full of fiery wrath against sin, than it is of gracious rewards to the obedience it requires. If heaven be in the promises, it is altogether equal that hell is in the threatenings. If death were not in the balance with life, eternal misery with eternal happiness, where would be the proportion?—Moreover, sin deserves the misery, but our best works do not deserve the happiness: yet both are set before us; sin and misery, holiness and happiness. What reason is there then to complain? 2. How severe soever the threatenings be, yet all have enough to do to reach the end of the law. "Fear him," says our Lord, "which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell;

yea, I say unto you, Fear him," Luke xii. 5. This bespeaks our dread of divine power and majesty; yet how few fear him indeed! The Lord knows the hearts of sinners to be exceedingly intent upon fulfilling their lusts; they cleave so fondly to their beloved sins, that a small force does not suffice to draw them away from them. They that travel through deserts, where they are in hazard from wild beasts, have need to carry fire along with them; and they have need of a hard wedge that have knotty timber to cleave: so a holy law must be fenced with dreadful wrath in a world lying in wickedness. But who are they that complain of that wrath as too great, but those to whom it is too little to draw them off from their sinful courses? It was the man who pretended to fear his Lord, because he was an austere man, that kept his pound laid up in a napkin; and so he was condemned out of his own mouth, Luke xix. 20—22. Thou art that man, even thou whose objection I am answering. How can the wrath which thou art under, and liable to, be too great when, as yet it is not sufficient to awaken thee to flee from it? Is it time to relax the penalties of the law, when men are trampling the commands of it under foot? 3. Consider how God dealt with his own Son, whom he spared not, Rom. viii. 32. The wrath of God seized on his soul and body both, and brought him into the dust of death. That his sufferings were not eternal, flowed from the quality of the Sufferer, who was infinite; and therefore able to bear, at once the whole load of wrath; and, upon that account, his sufferings were infinite in value. But as the sufferings of a mere creature cannot be infinite in value, they must be protracted to an eternity.—And what confidence can a rebel subject have to quarrel with his part of a punishment executed on the King's Son? 4. The sinner doth against God what he can: "Behold, thou hast done evil things as thou couldst," Jer. iii. 5. That thou hast not done more, and worse, thanks to him who restrained thee; to the chain by which the wolf was kept in, not to thyself. No wonder that God shews his power on the sinner, who puts forth his power against God, as far as it will reach. The unregenerate man puts no period to his sinful course; and would put no bounds to it neither, if he were not restrained by divine power, for wise ends: therefore it is just that he be for ever under wrath. 5. It is infinite majesty which sin strikes against; and so it is, in some sort, an infinite evil. Sin rises in its demerit, according to the quality of the party offended. If a man wound his neighbour, his goods must go for it; but if he wound his prince, his life must go for that. The infinity of God makes infinite wrath the just demerit of sin. God is infinitely displeased with sin; and when he acts, he must act like himself, and shew his displeasure by pro-

portionable means. 6. Those who shall lie for ever under this wrath will be eternally sinning, and therefore must eternally suffer; not only in respect of divine judicial procedure, but because sin is its own punishment, in the same manner as holy obedience is its own reward.

III. I now proceed to apply this doctrine of the misery of man's natural state.

USE I. Of information. Is our state by nature a state of wrath? Then,

1. Surely we are not born innocent. Those chains of wrath, which by nature are upon us, shew us to be born criminals. The swaddling-bands, wherewith infants are bound hand and foot as soon as they are born, may put us in mind of the cords of wrath, with which they are held prisoners, as children of wrath.

2. What desperate madness is it, for sinners to go on in their sinful course! What is it but to heap coals of fire on thine own head! to lay more and more fuel to the fire of wrath! to "treasure up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath!" Rom ii. 5. Thou mayest perish, "when his wrath is kindled but a little," Psalm ii. 12. Why wilt thou increase it yet more? Thou art already bound with such cords of death, as cannot easily be loosened; what need is there of more? Stand, careless sinner, and consider this.

3. Thou hast no reason to complain, as long as thou art out of hell. "Wherefore doth a living man complain?" Lam. iii. 39. If one, who has forfeited his life, be banished from his native country, and exposed to many hardships; he may well bear all patiently, seeing his life is spared. Do you murmur, because you are under pain and sickness? Nay, bless God, you are not there where the worm never dieth. Dost thou grudge, that thou art not in so good a condition in the world as some of thy neighbours are? Be thankful, rather, that you are not in the case of the damned. Is thy substance gone from thee? Wonder that the fire of God's wrath hath not consumed thee. Kiss the rod, O sinner! and acknowledge mercy; for God "punisheth us less than our iniquities deserve," Ezra ix. 13.

4. Here is a memorandum, both for poor and rich.

(1.) The poorest, that go from door to door, and have not one penny left them by their parents, were born to an inheritance. Their first father Adam left them "children of wrath:" and, continuing in their natural state, they cannot escape it; for "this is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed to him by God," Job xx. 29. An heritage that will furnish them with a habitation, who have not where to lay their head; they shall

be "cast into outer darkness," Matt. xxv. 30, for to them "is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever," Jude, ver. 13, where their bed shall be sorrow; "they shall lie down in sorrow," Isa. l. 11; their food shall be judgment, for God will "feed them with judgment," Ezek xxxiv. 16; and their drink shall be the red wine of God's wrath, "the dregs whereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring out, and drink them," Psalm lxxv. 8. I know that those who are destitute of worldly goods, and withal void of the knowledge and grace of God, who therefore may be called the devil's poor, will be apt to say here, "We hope God will make us suffer all our misery in this world, and that we shall be happy in the next;" as if their miserable outward condition, in time, would secure their happiness in eternity. A gross and fatal mistake! there is another inheritance which they have, namely, "Lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit," Jer. xvi. 19. But, "the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies," Isa. xxviii. 17. Dost thou think, O sinner, that God, who commands judges on earth "not to respect the person of the poor in judgment," Levit. xix. 15, will pervert judgment for thee? Nay, know for certain, that however miserable thou art here, thou shalt be eternally miserable hereafter, if thou livest and diest in thy natural state.

(2.) Many that have enough in the world, have far more than they know of. Thou hadst, it may be, O unregenerate man! an estate, a good portion, a large stock, left thee by thy father; thou hast improved it, and the sun of prosperity shines upon thee; so that thou canst say, with Esau, Gen. xxxiii. 9, "I have enough." But know, thou hast more than all that, an inheritance which thou dost not think of: thou art a child of wrath, an heir of hell. That is an heritage which will abide with thee amidst all the changes in the world, as long as thou continuest in an unregenerate state. When thou shalt leave thy substance to others, this will go along with thee into another world. It is no wonder a slaughter ox is fed to the full, and is not set to work as others are, Job xxi. 30, "The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath." Well then, "Rejoice, let thine heart cheer thee, walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes." Live above reproofs and warning from the word of God; shew thyself a man of a fine spirit, by casting off all fear of God; mock at seriousness; live like thyself, "a child of wrath," "an heir of hell:" "But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment," Eccl. xi. 9. Assure yourself, thy "breaking shall come suddenly at an instant," Isa. xxx. 13. "For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of a fool," Eccl. vii. 6. The fair blaze, and the

great noise which they make, are quickly gone: so shall thy mirth be. Then that wrath, that is now silently sinking into thy soul, shall make a fearful hissing.

5. Wo to him, that, like Moab, "hath been at ease from his youth, Jer. xlviii. 11, and never saw the black cloud of wrath hanging over his head. There are many who "have no changes, therefore they fear not God," Psalm lv. 19. They have lived in a good belief, as they call it, all their days; that is, they never had power to believe an ill report of their soul's state. Many have come by their religion too easily: and as it came lightly to them, so it will go from them, when the trial comes. Do ye think men flee from wrath in a morning dream? Or will they flee from the wrath they never saw pursuing them?

6. Think it not strange, if you see one in great distress about his soul's condition, who was wont to be as jovial, and as little concerned for salvation as any of his neighbours. Can one get a right view of himself, as in a state of wrath, and not be pierced with sorrows, terrors, and anxiety? When a weight quite above a man's strength, lies upon him, and he is alone, he can neither stir hand nor foot; but when one comes to lift it off him, he will struggle to get from under it. Thunder-claps of wrath from the word of God, conveyed to the soul by the Spirit of the Lord, will surely keep a man awake.

7. It is no wonder that wrath comes upon churches and nations, and upon us in this land, and that infants and children smart under it. Most of the society are yet children of wrath; few are fleeing from it, or taking the way to prevent it: but people of all ranks are helping it on. The Jews rejected Christ; and their children have been smarting under wrath these eighteen hundred years. God grant that the bad entertainment given to Christ and his gospel, by this generation, be not pursued with wrath on the succeeding one.

USE II. Of Exhortation. Here, 1. I shall drop a word to those who are yet in an unregenerate state. 2. To those who are brought out of it. 3. To all equally.

1. To you that are yet in an unregenerate state, I would sound the alarm, and warn you to see to yourselves, while there is yet hope. O you children of wrath take no rest in this dismal state; but flee to Christ, the only refuge; haste and make your escape thither. The state of wrath is too hot a climate for you to live in, Micah. ii. 10, "Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest." O sinner, knowest thou where thou art? Dost thou not see thy danger? The curse has entered into thy soul: wrath is thy covering;

the heavens are growing blacker and blacker above thy head; the earth is weary of thee, the pit is opening her mouth for thee, and should the thread of thy life be cut this moment, thou art thenceforth past all hope for ever. Sirs, if we saw you putting a cup of poison to your mouth, we should flee to you and snatch it out of your hands. If we saw the house on fire about you, while you were fast asleep in it, we would run to you, and drag you out of it. But alas! you are in ten thousand times greater hazard: yet we can do no more than tell you your danger; invite, exhort, and beseech you to look to yourselves: and lament your stupidity and obstinacy, when we cannot prevail with you to take warning. If there were no hope of your recovery, we should be silent, and would not torment you before the time: but though you be lost and undone, there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. Wherefore, I cry unto you, in the name of the Lord, and in the words of the prophet, Zech. ix. 12. "Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope." Flee to Jesus Christ out of this your natural state.

Motive 1. While you are in this state, you must stand or fall according to the law, or covenant of works. If you understood this aright, it would strike through your breasts as a thousand darts. One had better be a slave to the Turks, condemned to the galleys, or under Egyptian bondage, than be under the covenant of works now. All mankind were brought under it in Adam, as we heard before; and thou, in thy unregenerate state, art still where Adam left thee. It is true, there is another covenant brought in: but what is that to thee, who art not brought into it? Thou must needs be under one of the two covenants; either under the law, or under grace. That thou art not under grace, the dominion of sin over thee manifestly proves: therefore thou art under the law, Rom. vi. 14. Do not think God has laid aside the first covenant, Matth. v. 17, 18; Gal. iii. 10. No, he will "magnify the law, and make it honourable." It is broken indeed on thy part; but it is absurd to think, that therefore your obligation is dissolved. Nay, thou must stand and fall by it, till thou canst produce thy discharge from God himself, who is the party in that covenant; and this thou canst not pretend to, seeing thou art not in Christ.

Now, to give you a view of your misery, in this respect, consider these following things: 1. Hereby you are bound over to death, in virtue of the threatening of death in the covenant, Gen. ii. 17. The condition being broken you fall under the penalty. So it concludes you under wrath. 2. There is no salvation for you under this covenant, but on a condition impossible to be performed by you. The justice of God must be satisfied for the wrong which

you have done already. God has written this truth in characters of the blood of his own Son. Yea, and you must perfectly obey the law for the time to come. So says the law, Gal. iii. 12, "The man that doth them, shall live in them." Come then, O sinner! see if thou canst make a ladder, whereby thou mayest reach the throne of God: stretch forth thine arms, and try if thou canst fly on the wings of the wind, catch hold of the clouds, and pierce through these visible heavens: and then either climb over, or break through, the jasper walls of the city above. These things thou mayest do, as well as be able to reach heaven in thy natural state. under this covenant. 3. There is no pardon under this covenant. Pardon is the benefit of another covenant, with which thou hast nothing to do, Acts xiii. 39, "By him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." As for thee, thou art in the hands of a merciless creditor, who will take thee by the throat, saying, "Pay what thou owest;" and cast thee into prison, there to remain till thou hast paid the utmost farthing: unless thou be so wise as to get a surety in time, who is able to answer for all thy debt, and get up thy discharge. This Jesus Christ alone can do. Thou abidest under this covenant, and pleadest mercy; but what is thy plea founded on? There is not one promise of mercy or pardon in that covenant. Dost thou plead mercy for mercy's sake? Justice will step in between it and thee, and plead God's covenant threatening, which he cannot deny. 4. There is no place for repentance in this covenant, so as the sinner can be helped by it. For as soon as ever thou sinnest, the law lays its curse on thee, which is a dead weight thou canst by no means throw off; no, not though thine "head were waters, and thine eyes a fountain of tears, to weep day and night" for thy sin. That is what the law cannot do, in that it is "weak through the flesh," Rom. vii. 3. You are another profane Esau, that has sold the blessing; and there is no place for repentance, though you seek it carefully with tears, while under the covenant. 5. There is no acceptance of the will for the deed under this covenant, which was not made for good will, but good works. The mistake in this point ruins many. They are not in Christ, but stand under the first covenant; and yet they will plead this privilege. This is just like a man having made a feast for those of his own family, and when they sit down at table, another man's servant, that has run away from his master, presumptuously comes forward and sits down among them: would not the master of the feast give such a stranger that check, "Friend, how comest thou in hither?" and since he is none of his family, commanded him to be gone quickly. Though a mas-

ter accept the good-will of his own child for the deed, can a hired servant expect that privilege? 6. You have nothing to do with Christ while under that covenant. By the law of God, a woman cannot be married to two husbands at once: either death or divorce must dissolve the first marriage, ere she can marry another. So we must first be dead to the law, ere we can be married to Christ, Rom. vii. 4. The law is the first husband; Jesus Christ, who raises the dead, marries the widow, that was heartbroken, and slain by the first husband. But while the soul is in the house with the first husband, it cannot plead a marriage relation to Christ; nor the benefits of a marriage covenant, which is not yet entered into, Gal. v. 4, "Christ is become of no effect to you; whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen from grace." Peace, pardon, and such like benefits, are all benefits of the covenant of grace. You must not think to stand off from Christ, and the marriage covenant with him, and yet plead these benefits, any more than one man's wife can plead the benefit of a contract of marriage past between another man and his wife. 7. See the bill of exclusion, passed in the court of Heaven, against all under the covenant of works, Gal. iv. 30, "The son of the bond-woman shall not be heir." Compare ver. 24. Heirs of wrath must not be heirs of glory. Whom the first covenant hath power to exclude out of heaven, the second covenant cannot bring into it.

Objection. Then it is impossible for us to be saved. *Ans.* It is so while you are in that state; but if you would be out of that dreadful condition hasten out of that state. If a murderer be under sentence of death, so long as he lives within the kingdom, the laws will reach his life; but if he can make his escape, and get over the sea, into the dominions of another prince, our laws cannot reach him there. This is what we would have you to do; flee out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of God's dear Son; out of the dominion of the law, into the dominion of grace: then all the curses of the law, or covenant of works, shall never be able to reach you.

Motive 2. O ye children of wrath, your state is wretched, for you have lost God, and that is an unspeakable loss. You are without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12. Whatever you may call yours, you cannot call God yours. If we look to the earth, perhaps you can tell us, that land, that house, or that herd of cattle, is yours. But let us look upward to heaven; is that God, that grace, that glory, yours? Truly, you have neither part no lot in this matter. When Nebuchadnezzar talks of cities and kingdoms, O how big does he speak! "Great Babylon, that I have

built—my power—my majesty;" but he tells a poor tale, when he comes to speak of God, saying, "Your God," Dan. ii. 47, and iv. 30. Alas, sinner! whatever thou hast, God is gone from thee. O the misery of a godless soul! Hast thou lost God? Then, 1. The sap and substance of all thou hast in the world is gone. The godless man, have what he will, is one that hath not, Matt. xxv. 29. I defy the unregenerate man to attain to soul satisfaction, whatever he possesseth, since God is not his God. All his days he eats in darkness: in every condition there is a secret dissatisfaction haunts his heart, like a ghost: the soul wants something though perhaps it knows not what; and so it will be always, till the soul return to God, the fountain of satisfaction. 2. Thou canst do nothing to purpose for thyself; for God is gone, his soul is departed from thee, Jer. vi. 8, like a leg out of joint hanging by, whereof a man has no use, as the word there used signifies. Losing God, thou hast lost the fountain of good; and so all grace, all goodness, all the saving influences of his Spirit. What canst thou do then? What fruit canst thou bring forth, more than a branch cut off from the stock? John xv. 5. Thou art become unprofitable, Rom. iii. 12, as a filthy rotten thing, fit only for the dunghill. 3. Death has come up into thy windows, yea, and has settled on thy face; for God, in whose favour life is, Psalm xxx. 5, is gone from thee, and so the life of thy soul is departed. What a loathsome lump is the body, when the soul is gone! Far more loathsome is thy soul in this case. Thou art dead while thou livest. Do not deny it, seeing thy speech is laid, thine eyes closed, and all spiritual motion in thee ceased. Thy true friends who see thy case, lament, because thou art gone into the land of silence. 4. Thou hast not a steady friend amongst all the creatures of God; for now that thou hast lost the master's favour, all the family is set against thee. Conscience is thine enemy: the word never speaks good of thee: God's people loathe so far as they see what thou art, Psalm xv. 4. The beasts and stones of the field are banded together against thee, Job v. 23; Hos. ii. 18. Thy meat, drink, and clothes, grudge being serviceable to the wretch that has lost God, and abuseth them to his dishonour. The earth groans under thee; yea, "the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together," because of thee, and such as thou art, Rom. viii. 22. Heaven will have nothing to do with thee; for "there shall in no wise enter into it, any thing that defileth," Rev. xxi. 27. Only "hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming," Isa. xiv. 9. 5. Thy hell is begun already. What makes hell, but exclusion from the presence of God? "Depart from me, ye cursed." You are gone from God already, with the

curse upon you. That which is now your choice, shall be your punishment at length, if you turn not. As a gracious state is a state of glory in the bud; so a graceless state is hell in the bud, which, if it continue, will come at length to perfection.

Motive 3. Consider the dreadful instances of the wrath of God; and let them serve to awaken thee to flee out of this state. Consider 1. How it is fallen on men. Even in this world, many have been set up as monuments of Divine vengeance, that others might fear. Wrath has swept away multitudes, who have fallen together by the hand of an angry God. Consider how the Lord "spared not the old world—bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly: And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly," 2 Pet. ii. 5, 6. But it is yet more dreadful to think of that weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, amongst those who in hell lift up their eyes, but cannot get a drop of water to cool their tongues. Believe these things and be warned by them, lest destruction come upon thee, for a warning to others. 2. Consider how wrath fell upon the fallen angels, whose case is absolutely hopeless. They were the first that ventured to break the hedge of the Divine law; and God set them up for monuments of his wrath against sin. They once "left their own habitation," and were never allowed to look in again at the hole of the door; but they are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day," Jude ver. 6. 3. Behold how an angry God dealt with his own Son, standing in the room of elect sinners, Rom. viii. 32, "God spared not his Son." Sparing mercy might have been expected, if any at all. If any person could have obtained it, surely his own Son would have got it: but he spared him not. The Father's delight is made a man of sorrows: he who is the wisdom of God, becomes sore amazed, ready to faint away in a fit of horror. The weight of this wrath makes him sweat great drops of blood. By the fierceness of this fire, his heart was like wax melted in the midst of his bowels. Behold, here, how severe God is against sin! The sun was struck blind with this terrible sight, rocks were rent, graves opened; death, as it were, in the excess of astonishment, letting its prisoners slip away. What is a deluge, a shower of fire and brimstone, on the people of Sodom, the terrible noise of a dissolving world, the whole fabric of heaven and earth disuniting at once, and angels cast down from heaven into the bottomless pit! What are all these, I say, in comparison with this, God in human nature suffering! groaning! dying upon a cross! Infinite holiness did it, to make sin look like itself, that is, infi-

nitely odious. And will men live at ease, while exposed to this wrath?

Motive 4. Consider what a God he is with whom thou hast to do, and whose wrath thou art liable unto. He is the God of infinite knowledge and wisdom; so that none of thy sins, however secret, can be hid from him. He infallibly finds out all means, whereby wrath may be executed, toward the satisfying of justice. He is of infinite power, and so can do what he will against the sinner. How heavy must the strokes of wrath be, which are laid on by an omnipotent hand! Infinite power can make the sinner prisoner, even when he is in his greatest rage against Heaven. It can bring again the several parcels of dust out of the grave, put them together again, re-unite the soul and body, summon them before the tribunal, hurry them away to the pit, and hold them up with the one hand, through eternity, while they are lashed with the other. He is infinitely just, and therefore must punish: it were acting contrary to his nature to suffer the sinner to escape wrath. Hence the executing of this wrath is pleasing to him: for though the Lord hath no delight in the death of a sinner, as it is the destruction of his own creature, yet he delights in it, as it is the execution of justice. "Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest." Mark the reason; "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness," Psalm xi. 6, 7, "I will cause my fury to rest upon them, and I will be comforted," Ezek. v. 13. "I also will laugh at your calamity," Prov. i. 26. Finally, He lives for ever, to pursue the quarrel. Let us therefore conclude, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Be awakened then, O young sinner! be awakened, O old sinner! who are yet in the state you were born in! Your security is none of God's allowance; it is the sleep of death; rise out of it, ere the pit close its mouth upon you. It is true, you may put on a breastplate of iron, make your brow brass, and your heart as an adamant; and who can help it? But God will break that brazen brow, and make that adamantine heart at last to fly into a thousand pieces. You may, if you will labour to put these things out of your heads, that you may sleep in fancied safety, though in a state of wrath. You may run away, with the arrows sticking in your consciences, to your labour, to work them away; or to your beds, to sleep them out; or to company, to sport and laugh them away: but convictions, so stifled, will have a fearful resurrection; and the day is coming, unless thou takest warning in time, when the arrows of wrath shall so stick in thy soul, as thou shalt never be able to pluck them out through the ages of eternity.

But if any desire to flee from the wrath to come, and, for that end to know what course to take, I offer them these few advices; and implore and beseech them, as they love their own souls, to fall in with them. 1. Retire to some secret place and there meditate on this your misery. Believe it, and fix your thoughts on it. Let each put the question to himself, How can I live in this state? How can I die in it? How shall I rise again, and stand before the tribunal of God in it? 2. Consider seriously the sin of your nature, heart, and life. A proper sight of wrath flows from a deep sense of sin. They who see themselves exceedingly sinful, will find no great difficulty to perceive themselves to be heirs of wrath. 3. Labour to justify God in this matter. To quarrel with God about it, and to rage like a wild bull in a net, will but fix you the more in it. Humiliation of soul before the Lord is necessary for an escape. God will not sell deliverance, but freely gives it to those who see themselves altogether unworthy of his favour. 4. Turn your eyes, O prisoners of hope, towards the Lord Jesus Christ; and embrace him, as he offereth himself in the gospel. "There is no salvation in any other," Acts iv. 12. God is a consuming fire; you are children of wrath: if the Mediator interpose not between him and you, you are undone for ever. If you would be safe, come under his shadow: one drop of that wrath cannot fall there, for he "delivereth us from the wrath to come," 1 Thess. i. 10. Accept of him in this covenant, wherein he offereth himself to thee; so thou shalt, as the captive woman, redeem thy life, by marrying the conqueror. His blood will quench that fire of wrath which burns against thee: in the white raiment of his righteousness thou wilt be safe; for no storm of wrath can pierce it.

2. I shall drop a few words to the saints.

(1.) "Remember—that at that time," namely, when you were in your natural state, "ye were without Christ—having no hope, and without God in the world." Call to mind the state you were in formerly; and review the misery of it. There are five memorials which I may thence give in to the whole assembly of the saints, who are no more children of wrath, but "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," though as yet in their minority. 1. Remember, that in the day our Lord first took you by the hand, you were in no better a condition than others. O! what moved him to take you when he passed by your neighbours? he found you children of wrath, even as others: but he did not leave you so. He came into the common prison, where you lay in fetters, even as others: from among the multitude of condemned malefactors, he picked you out, commanded your fetters to be taken off, put a pardon in your hand,

and brought you into the glorious liberty of the children of God, while he left others in the devil's fetters. 2. Remember there was nothing in you to engage him to love you, in the day he appeared for your deliverance. You were children of wrath, even as others; fit for hell, and altogether unfit for heaven: yet the King brought you into the palace; the King's Son made love to you, a condemned criminal, and espoused you to himself, on the day in which you might have been led forth to execution. "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight," Matth. xi. 26. 3. Remember, you were fitter to be loathed than loved in that day. Wonder, that when he saw you in your blood, he looked not at you with abhorrence, and passed by. Wonder, that ever such a time could be a time of love, Ezek. xvi. 8, 4. Remember, you are decked with borrowed feathers. It is his comeliness which is upon you, ver. 14. It was he that took off your prison garments, and clothed you with robes of righteousness, garments of salvation; garments wherewith you are arrayed as the lilies, which toil not, neither do they spin. He took the chains from off your arms, the rope from about your neck; put you in such a dress, as you might be fit for the court of heaven, even to eat at the King's table. 5. Remember your faults this day, as Pharaoh's butler, who had forgotten Joseph. Mind how you have forgotten, and how unkindly you have treated, him who remembered you in your low estate. Is this your kindness to your friend? In the day of your deliverance, did you think you could have thus requited him, your Lord?

(2.) Pity the children of wrath, the world that lies in wickedness. Can you be unconcerned for them, you who were once in the same condition? You have got ashore, indeed, but your companions are yet in hazard of perishing; and will not you afford them all possible help for their deliverance? What they are, you formerly were. This may draw pity from you, and engage you to use all means for their recovery. See Titus iii. 1—3.

(3.) Admire that matchless love which brought you out of the state of wrath. Christ's love was active love; he brought thy soul from the pit of corruption!—It was no easy work to purchase the life of the condemned sinner; but he gave his life for thy life. He gave his precious blood to quench the flame of wrath, which otherwise would have consumed thee. Men get the best view of the stars from the bottom of a deep pit; from this pit of misery, into which thou wast cast by the fall of the first Adam, thou mayest get the best view of the Sun of Righteousness, in all his dimensions. He is the second Adam, who took thee out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay. How broad was that love, which covered such a

multitude of sins! Behold the length of it, reaching from everlasting to everlasting, Psalm ciii. 17. The depth of it, going so low as to deliver thee from the lowest hell, Psalm lxxxvi. 13. The height of it, raising thee up to sit in heavenly places, Eph. ii. 6.

(4.) Be humble, carry low sails, walk softly all your years. Be not proud of your gifts, graces, privileges, or attainments; but remember you were children of wrath, even as others. The peacock walks slowly, hangs down his starry feathers, while he looks to his black feet. "Look ye to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged;" and walk humbly, as it becomes free grace's debtors.

(5.) Be wholly for your Lord. Every wife is obliged to be dutiful to her husband; but double ties lie upon her who was taken from a prison, or a dunghill. If your Lord has delivered you from wrath, you ought, on that very account, to be wholly his; to act for him, to suffer for him, and to do whatever he calls you to.—The saints have no reason to complain of their lot in the world, whatever it be. Well may they bear the cross for Him, by whom the curse was borne away from them. Well may they bear the wrath of men in his cause, who has freed them from the wrath of God; and cheerfully go to a fire for him, by whom hell-fire is quenched as to them. Soul and body, and all thou hadst in the world, were formerly under wrath: he has removed that wrath, shall not all these be at his service? That thy soul is not overwhelmed with the wrath of God, is owing purely to Jesus Christ; and shall it not be a temple for his Spirit? That thy heart is not filled with horror and despair is owing to Him only; to whom then should it be devoted, but to him alone? That thine eyes are not blinded with the smoke of the pit; thy hands not fettered with chains of darkness; thy tongue is not broiling in the fire of hell; and thy feet are not standing in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone,—is owing purely to Jesus Christ! and shall not these eyes be employed for him, these hands act for him, this tongue speak for him, and these feet speedily run his errands? To him who believes that he was a child of wrath, even as others, but is now delivered by the blessed Jesus, nothing will appear too much, to do or suffer for his Deliverer, when he has a fair call to it.

3. To conclude with a word to all. Let no man think lightly of sin, which lays the sinner open to the wrath of God. Let not the sin of our nature, which wreathes the yoke of God's wrath so early about our necks, seem a small thing in our eyes. Fear the Lord because of his dreadful wrath. Tremble at the thought of sin, against which God has such fiery indignation. Look on his wrath, and stand in awe, and sin not. Do you think this is to press you to

slavish fear? If it were so, one had better be a slave to God with a trembling heart, than a free man to the devil, with a seared conscience and a heart of adamant. But it is not so; you may love him, and thus fear him too; yea, you ought to do it, though you were saints of the first magnitude. See Psalm cxix. 120; Matt. x. 28; Luke xii. 5; Heb. xii. 28, 29. Although you have passed the gulph of wrath, being in Jesus Christ, yet it is but reasonable that your hearts should shiver when you look back to it. Your sin still deserves wrath, even as the sins of others; and it would be terrible to be in a fiery furnace, although by a miracle we were so protected against it, as that it could not harm us.

PART III.

MAN'S UTTER INABILITY TO RECOVER HIMSELF.

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.—ROMANS v. 6.

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.—JOHN v. 44.

WE have now had a view of the total corruption of man's nature, and that load of wrath which lies on him, that gulf of misery into which he is plunged in his natural state. But there is one part of his misery that deserves particular consideration; namely, his utter inability to recover himself; the knowledge of which is necessary for the due humiliation of a sinner. What I design here, is only to propose a few things, whereby to convince the unregenerate man of this his inability; that he may see an absolute need of Christ and of the power of his grace.

As a man that is fallen into a pit cannot be supposed to help himself out of it, but by one of two ways; either by doing all himself alone, or taking hold of, and improving, the help offered him by others: so an unconverted man cannot be supposed to help himself out of his natural state, but either in the way of the law, or covenant of works, by doing all himself without Christ; or else in the way of the Gospel, or covenant of grace, by exerting his own strength to lay hold upon, and to make use of the help offered him by a Saviour. But, alas! the unconverted man is dead in the pit, and cannot help himself either of these ways; not the first way; for the

first text tells us, that when our Lord came to help us, "we were without strength," unable to recover ourselves. We were ungodly, therefore under a burden of guilt and wrath; yet "without strength," unable to stand under it; and unable to throw it off, or get from under it: so that all mankind would have undoubtedly perished, had not "Christ died for the ungodly," and brought help to those who could never have recovered themselves. But when Christ comes and offers help to sinners, cannot they take it? Cannot they improve help when it comes to their hands? No, the second text tells, they cannot; "No man can come unto me,"&c.—that is, believe in me, John vi. 44, "except the Father draw him." This is a drawing which enables them to come, who, till then could not come; and therefore could not help themselves by improving the help offered. It is a drawing which is always effectual; for it can be no less than "hearing and learning the Father," which, whoever partakes of, cometh to Christ, ver. 45. Therefore it is not drawing in the way of mere moral suasion, which may be, yea, and always is effectual. But it is drawing by mighty power, Eph. i. 12, absolutely necessary for those who have no power in themselves to come and take hold of the offered help.

Hearken then, O unregenerate man, and be convinced that as thou art in a most miserable state by nature, so thou art utterly unable to recover thyself any way. Thou art ruined; and what way wilt thou go to work, to recover thyself? Which of the two ways wilt thou choose? Wilt thou try it alone; or wilt thou make use of help? Wilt thou fall on the way of works, or on the way of the Gospel? I know very well that thou wilt not so much as try the way of the Gospel, till once thou hast found the recovery impracticable in the way of the law. Therefore, we shall begin where corrupt nature teaches men to begin, namely, at the way of the law of works.

I. Sinner, I would have thee to believe that thy working will never effect it. Work, and do thy best; thou wilt never be able to work thyself out of this state of corruption and wrath. Thou must have Christ, else thou wilt perish eternally. It is only "Christ in you" that can be the hope of glory. But if thou wilt needs try it, then I must lay before thee, from the unalterable word of the living God, two things which thou must do for thyself. If thou canst do them, it must be yielded, that thou art able to recover thyself; but if not, then thou canst do nothing this way for thy recovery.

1. "If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments," Matt. xix. 17. That is, if thou wilt by doing enter into life, then perfectly keep the ten commandments; for the object of these words

is to beat down the pride of the man's heart, and to let him see an absolute need of a Saviour, from the impossibility of keeping the law. The answer is given suitably to the address. Our Lord checks him for his compliment, "Good Master," ver. 16, telling him, "There is none good but one, that is God," ver. 17. As if he had said, You think yourself a good man, and me another; but where goodness is spoken of, men and angels may veil their faces before the good God. As to his question, wherein he discovered his legal disposition, Christ does not answer him, saying, "Believe and thou shalt be saved;" that would not have been so seasonable in the case of one who thought he could do well enough for himself, if he but knew "what good he should do;" but, suitable to the humour the man was in, he bids him "keep the commandments;" keep them nicely and accurately, as those that watch malefactors in prison, lest any of them escape, and their life be taken for those which escape. See then, O unregenerate man, what thou canst do in this matter; for if thou wilt recover thyself in this way, thou must perfectly keep the commandments of God.

(1.) Thy obedience must be perfect, in respect of the principle of it; that is, thy soul, the principle of action, must be perfectly pure, and altogether without sin. For the law requires all moral perfection; not only actual, but habitual: and so condemns original sin; impurity of nature, as well as of actions. Now, if thou canst bring this to pass, thou wilt be able to answer that question of Solomon, so as never one of Adam's posterity could yet answer it, "Who can say, I have made my heart clean?" Prov. xx. 9. But if thou canst not, the very want of this perfection is sin, and so lays thee open to the curse and cuts thee off from life. Yea, it makes all thine actions, even thy best actions, sinful: "For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Job xiv. 4. And dost thou think by sin to help thyself out of sin and misery?

(2.) Thy obedience must also be perfect in parts. It must be as broad as the whole law of God: if thou lackest one thing, thou art undone; for the law denounces the curse on him that continueth not in every thing written therein, Gal. iii. 10. Thou must give internal and external obedience to the whole law; keep all the commands in heart and life. If thou break any one of them, that will insure thy ruin. A vain thought, or idle word, will still shut thee up under the curse.

(3.) It must be perfect in respect of degrees; as was the obedience of Adam, while he stood in his innocence. This the law requires, and will accept of no less, Matt. xxii. 37, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and

with all thy mind." If one degree of that love, required by the law, be wanting; if each part of thy obedience be not brought up to the greatest height commanded; that want is a breach of the law, and so leaves thee still under the curse. A man may bring as many buckets of water to a house that is on fire, as he is able to carry; and yet it may be consumed, and will be so, if he bring not as many as will quench the fire. Even so, although thou shouldst do what thou art able, in keeping the commandments, if thou fail in the least degree of obedience, which the law enjoins, thou art certainly ruined for ever; unless thou take hold of Christ, renouncing all thy righteousness, as filthy rags. See Rom. x. 5; Gal. iii. 10.

(4.) It must be perpetual, as the man Christ's obedience was, who always did the things which pleased the Father; for the tenor of the law is, "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them." Hence, though Adam's obedience was, for a while, absolutely perfect; yet because at length he failed in one point, namely, in eating the forbidden fruit, he fell under the curse of the law. If a man were to live a dutiful subject to his prince, till the close of his days, and then conspire against him, he must die for his treason. Even so, though thou shouldst, all the time of thy life, live in perfect obedience to the law of God, and yet at the hour of death only entertain a vain thought, or pronounce an idle word, that idle word, or vain thought, would blot out all thy former righteousness, and ruin thee; namely, in this way in which thou art seeking to recover thyself.

Now, such is the obedience which thou must perform, if thou wouldst recover thyself in the way of the law.—But though thou wouldst thus obey, the law stakes thee down in the state of wrath, till another demand of it be satisfied.

2. Thou must pay what thou owest. It is undeniable that thou art a sinner; and whatever thou mayest be in time to come, justice must be satisfied for thy sins already committed. The honour of the law must be maintained, by thy suffering the denounced wrath. It may be thou hast changed thy course of life, or art now resolved to do it, and to set about keeping the commands of God: but what hast thou done, or what wilt thou do, with the old debt? Your obedience to God, though it were perfect, is a debt due to him, for the time wherein it is performed; and can no more satisfy for former sins, than a tenant's paying the current year's rent can satisfy the landlord for all arrears. Can the paying of new debts acquit a man from old accounts? Nay, deceive not yourselves; you will find these laid up in store with God, and sealed up among

his treasures, Deut. xxxii. 34. It remains then, that either thou must bear that wrath, to which for thy sin thou art liable, according to the law; or else thou must acknowledge that thou canst not bear it, and thereupon have recourse to the surety, the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me now ask thee, Art thou able to satisfy the justice of God? Canst thou pay thy own debt? Surely not: for, as he is the infinite God, whom thou hast offended; the punishment, being suited to the quality of the offence, must be infinite.—But thy punishment, or sufferings for sin, cannot be infinite in value, for thou art a finite creature: therefore, they must be infinite in duration or continuance; that is, they must be eternal. And so all thy sufferings in this world are but an earnest of what thou must suffer in the world to come.

Now, sinner, if thou canst answer these demands, thou mayest recover thyself in the way of the law. But art thou not conscious of thy inability to do any of these things; much more to do them all? yet if thou do not all, thou dost nothing. Turn then, to what course of life thou wilt, thou art still in a state of wrath. Screw up thine obedience to the greatest height thou canst; suffer what God lays upon thee; yea, add, if thou wilt, to the burden, and walk under all without the least impatience: yet all this will not satisfy the demands of the law; therefore thou art still a ruined creature. Alas, sinner! what art thou doing, while thou strivest to help thyself, but dost not receive, and unite with, Jesus Christ? Thou art labouring in the fire, wearying thyself for very vanity; labouring to enter into heaven, by the door which Adam's sin so bolted, that neither he, nor any of his lost posterity, can ever enter by it. Dost thou not see the flaming sword of justice, keeping thee off from the tree of life? Dost thou not hear the law denouncing a curse on thee, for all thou art doing; even for thy obedience, thy prayers, thy tears, thy reformation of life, and so on; because, being under the law's dominion, thy best works are not so good as it requires them to be under the pain of the curse? Believe it, sirs, if you live and die out of Christ, without being actually united to him as the second Adam, the life-giving Spirit, and without coming under the covert of his atoning blood; though you should do the utmost that any man can do, in keeping the commands of God, you can never see the face of God in peace. If you should, from this moment, bid an eternal farewell to this world's joys, and all the affairs thereof, and henceforth busy yourselves with nothing but the salvation of your souls; if you should go into some wilderness, live upon the grass of the field, and be companions to dragons and owls; if you should retire to some dark cavern of the earth, and weep

there for your sins, until you had wept yourselves blind; if you should confess with your tongue, until it cleave to the roof of your mouth; pray, till your knees grow hard as horns; fast, till your body become like a skeleton; and, after all this, give it to be burnt; the word is gone out of the Lord's mouth in righteousness, and cannot return, that you shall perish for ever, notwithstanding all this, as not being in Christ: John xiv. 6, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me." Acts iv. 12, "Neither is there salvation in any other." Mark xvi. 16, "He that believeth not, shall be damned."

Objection. But God is a merciful God, and he knows that we are not able to answer these demands; we hope therefore to be saved, if we do as well as we can, and keep the commands as well as we are able. *Answer* 1. Though thou art able to do many things, thou art not able to do one thing right: thou canst do nothing acceptable to God, being out of Christ, John xv. 5, "Without me ye can do nothing." An unrenewed man, as thou art, can do nothing but sin; as we have already proved. Thy best actions are sin, and so they increase thy debt to justice: how then can it be expected they should lessen it? 2. Though God should offer to save men, upon condition that they did all they could do, in obedience to his commands, yet we have reason to think, that those who should attempt it, would never be saved: for where is the man that does as well as he can? Who sees not many false steps he has made, which he might have avoided? There are so many things to be done, so many temptations to carry us out of the road of duty, and our nature is so very apt to be set on fire of hell, that we surely must fail, even in some point that is within the compass of our natural abilities. But, 3. Though thou shouldst do all thou art able to do, in vain dost thou hope to be saved in that way. What word of God is this hope of thine founded on? It is neither founded on law nor gospel; therefore it is but a delusion. It is not founded on the Gospel; for the Gospel leads the soul out of itself, to Jesus Christ for all; and it establishes the law, Rom. iii. 31. Whereas this hope of yours cannot be established, but on the ruins of the law, which God will magnify and make honourable. Hence it appears, that it is not founded on the law neither. When God set Adam a-working for happiness to himself and his posterity, perfect obedience was the condition required of him; and the curse was denounced in case of disobedience. The law being broken by him, he and his posterity were subjected to the penalty for sin committed; and withal were still bound to perfect obedience: for it is absurd to think, that man's sinning, and suffering for his sin, should

free him from his duty of obedience to his Creator. When Christ came in the room of the elect, to purchase their salvation, the terms were the same. Justice had the elect under arrest: if he is desirous to deliver them, the terms are known. He must satisfy for their sin, by suffering the punishment due to it; he must do what they cannot do, namely, obey the law perfectly, and so fulfil all righteousness. Accordingly, all this he did, and so became "the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth," Rom. x. 4. And dost thou think that God will abate these terms as to thee, when his own Son got no abatement of them? Expect it not, though thou shouldst beg it with tears of blood; for if they prevailed, they must prevail against the truth, justice, and honour of God: Gal. iii. 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them." Ver. 12, "And the law is not of faith: but, the man that doth them, shall live in them." It is true, that God is merciful: but cannot he be merciful, unless he save you in a way that is neither consistent with his law, nor his Gospel? Have not his goodness and mercy sufficiently appeared, in sending the Son of his love, to do "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh?" He has provided help for those who cannot help themselves: but thou, insensible of thine own weakness, must needs think to recover thyself by thine own works, while thou art no more able to do it, than to remove mountains of brass out of their place.

Wherefore I conclude, that thou art utterly unable to recover thyself, in the way of works, or by the law. O that thou wouldst conclude the same concerning thyself!

II. Let us try next what the sinner can do to recover himself, in the way of the gospel. It may be thou thinkest, that thou canst not do all by thyself alone, yet Jesus Christ offering thee help, thou canst of thyself embrace it, and use it for thy recovery. But, O sinner, be convinced of thine absolute need of the grace of Christ: for truly, there is help offered, but thou canst not accept it: there is a rope cast out to draw shipwrecked sinners to land, but, alas! they have no hands to lay hold of it. They are like infants exposed in the open field, who must starve, though their food be lying by them, unless some one put it in their mouths. To convince natural men of this, let it be considered,

1. That although Christ is offered in the gospel, yet they cannot believe in him. Saving faith is the faith of God's elect; the special gift of God to them, wrought in them by his Spirit. Salvation is offered to them that will believe in Christ, but how can you believe? John v. 44. It is offered to those that will come to Christ; but

"no man can come unto him, except the Father draw him." It is offered to those that will look to him, as lifted on the pole of the gospel, Isa. xlv. 22; but the natural man is spiritually blind, Rev. iii. 17; and as to the things of the Spirit of God, he cannot know them, for they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Nay, whosoever will, he is welcome; let him come, Rev. xxii. 17; but there must be a day of power on the sinner, before he can be willing, Psalm cx. 3.

2. Man naturally has nothing wherewithal to improve, for his recovery, the help brought in by the gospel. He is cast away in a state of wrath; and is bound hand and foot, so that he cannot lay hold of the cords of love thrown out to him in the gospel. The most cunning artificer cannot work without tools; neither can the most skilful musician play well on an instrument that is out of tune. How can any one believe, or repent, whose understanding is darkness, Eph. v. 8; whose heart is a stony heart, inflexible, insensible, Ezek. xxxvi. 26; whose affections are wholly disordered and distempered; who is averse to good, and bent to evil? The arms of natural abilities are too short to reach supernatural help: hence those who most excel in them, are often most estranged from spiritual things, Matt. xi. 25, "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent."

3. Man cannot work a saving change on himself: but so changed he must be, else he can neither believe nor repent, nor ever see heaven. No action can be without a suitable principle. Believing, repenting, and the like, are the product of the new nature; and can never be produced by the old corrupt nature. Now, what can the natural man do in this matter? He must be regenerate; begotten again unto a lively hope; but as the child cannot be active in his own generation, so a man cannot be active but passive only, in his own regeneration. The heart is shut against Christ: man cannot open it, only God can do it by his grace, Acts xvi. 14. He is dead in sin; he must be quickened, raised out of his grave; who can do this but God himself? Eph. ii. 1—5. Nay, he must be "created in Christ Jesus, unto good works," Eph. ii. 10. These are works of omnipotence, and can be done by no less a power.

4. Man, in his depraved state, is under an utter inability to do any thing truly good, as was proved before at large: how then can he obey the gospel? His nature is the very reverse of the gospel: how can he, of himself, fall in with that plan of salvation, and accept the offered remedy? The corruption of man's nature infallibly includes his utter inability to recover himself in any way, and whoso is convinced of the one, must needs admit the other; for they

stand and fall together. Were all the purchase of Christ offered to the unregenerate man, for one good thought, he cannot command it, 2 Cor. iii. 5, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves." Were it offered on condition of a good word, yet "How can ye, being evil, speak good things? Matt. xii. 35. Nay, were it left to yourselves, to choose what is easiest, Christ himself tells you, John xv. 5, "Without me, ye can do nothing."

5. The natural man cannot but resist the Lord's offering to help him; yet that resistance is infallibly overcome in the elect, by converting grace. Can the stony heart but choose to resist the stroke? There is not only an inability, but an enmity and obstinacy in man's will by nature. God knows, O natural man, whether thou knowest it or not, that "thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass," Isa. xlviii. 4, and cannot be overcome, but by him, who hath "broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder." Hence, commonly speaking, there is such hard work in converting a sinner. Sometimes he seems to be caught in the net of the gospel; yet quickly he slips away again. The hook catches hold of him; but he struggles, till, getting free of it, he goes away with a bleeding wound. When good hopes are conceived of him, by those that travail in birth for the forming of Christ in him, there is oft-times nothing brought forth but wind. The deceitful heart makes many contrivances to avoid a Saviour, and cheat the man of his eternal happiness. Thus the natural man lies sunk in a state of sin and wrath, and utterly unable to recover himself.

Objection 1. If we be under an utter inability to do any good, how can God require us to do it? *Answer.* God making man upright, Eccl. vii. 29, gave him a power to do every thing that he should require of him; this power man lost by his own fault. We were bound to serve God, and do whatever he commanded us, as being his creatures; and also, we were under the superadded tie of a covenant, for that purpose. Now, we having, by our own fault, disabled ourselves, shall God lose his right of requiring our task, because we have thrown away the strength he gave us whereby to perform it? Has the creditor no right to require payment of his money, because the debtor has squandered it away, and is not able to pay him? Truly, if God can require no more of us than we are able to do, we need no more to save us from wrath, but to make ourselves unable for every duty, and to incapacitate ourselves for serving God any manner of way, as profane men frequently do: and so the deeper a man is plunged in sin, he will be the more secure from wrath; for where God can require no duty of us, we do not sin in omitting it;

and where there is no sin, there can be no wrath. As to what may be urged by the unhumbled soul, against the putting our stock in Adam's hand, the righteousness of that dispensation was explained before. But moreover, the unrenewed man is daily throwing away the very remains of natural abilities, that rational light and strength which are to be found amongst the ruins of mankind. Nay, farther, he will not believe his own utter inability to help himself; so that out of his own mouth, he must be condemned. Even those who make their natural impotency too good a covert to their sloth, do, with others, delay the work of turning to God from time to time, and, under convictions, make large promises of reformation, which afterwards they never regard, and delay their repentance to a death-bed, as if they could help themselves in a moment; which shews them to be far from a due sense of their natural inability, whatever they pretend.

Now, if God can require of men the duty they are not able to do, he can in justice punish them for their not doing it, notwithstanding their inability. If he has power to exact the debt of obedience, he has also power to cast the insolvent debtor into prison, for his not paying it. Further, though unregenerate men have no gracious abilities, yet they want not natural abilities which nevertheless they will not improve. There are many things they can do, which they do not; they will not do them, and therefore their damnation will be just. Nay, all their inability to do good is voluntary; they will not come to Christ, John v. 40. They will not repent, they will die, Ezek. xviii. 31. So they will be justly condemned; because they will neither turn to God, nor come to Christ; but love their chains better than their liberty, and darkness rather than light, John iii. 19.

Objection 2. Why do you then preach Christ to us; call us to come to him, to believe, repent, and use the means of salvation? *Answer*. Because it is our duty so to do. It is your duty to accept of Christ, as he is offered in the Gospel; to repent of your sins, and to be holy in all manner of conversation: these things are commanded you of God; and his command, not your ability, is the measure of your duty. Moreover, these calls and exhortations are the means that God is pleased to make use of, for converting his elect, and working grace in their hearts: to them, "faith cometh by hearing," Rom. x. 17, while they are as unable to help themselves as the rest of mankind are. Upon very good grounds may we, at the command of God, who raiseth the dead, go to their graves, and cry in his name, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light," Eph. v. 14. And seeing

the elect are not to be known and distinguished from others before conversion; as the sun shines on the blind man's face, and the rain falls on the rocks as well as on the fruitful plains; so we preach Christ to all, and shoot the arrow at a venture, which God himself directs as he sees fit. Moreover, these calls and exhortations are not altogether in vain, even to those who are not converted by them. Such persons may be convinced, though they be not converted: although they be not sanctified by these means, yet they may be restrained by them, from running into that excess of wickedness, which otherwise they would arrive at. The means of grace serve, as it were, to enbalm many dead souls, which are never quickened by them: though they do not restore them to life, yet they keep them from putrefying, as otherwise they would do. Finally, Though you cannot recover yourselves, nor take hold of the saving help offered to you in the Gospel; yet even by the power of nature, you may use the outward and ordinary means, whereby Christ communicates the benefit of redemption to ruined sinners, who are utterly unable to recover themselves out of the state of sin and wrath. You may and can, if you please, do many things that would set you in a fair way for help from the Lord Jesus Christ. You may go so far on, as not to be far from the kingdom of God, as the discreet Scribe had done, Mark xii. 34, though, it should seem, he was destitute of supernatural abilities. Though you cannot cure yourselves, yet you may come to the pool, where many such diseased persons as you are, have been cured; though you have none to put you into it, yet you may lie at the side of it: "Who knows but the Lord may return, and leave a blessing behind him?" as in the case of the impotent man, recorded in John v. 5—8. I hope Satan does not chain you to your houses, nor stake you down in your fields on the Lord's day; but you are at liberty and can wait at the posts of wisdom's doors if you will. When you come thither he does not beat drums at your ears, that you cannot hear what is said; there is no force upon you, obliging you to apply all you hear to others; you may apply to yourselves what belongs to your state and condition. When you go home, you are not fettered in your houses, where perhaps no religious discourse is to be heard; but you may retire to some separate place, where you can meditate, and exercise your consciences with suitable questions upon what you have heard. You are not possessed with a dumb devil, that you cannot get your mouths opened in prayer to God. You are not so driven out of your beds to your worldly business, and from your worldly business to your beds again, but you might, if you would, make some prayer to God upon the case of your perishing souls.—

You may examine yourselves as to the state of your souls, in a solemn manner, as in the presence of God; you may discern that you have no grace, and that you are lost and undone without it; and you may cry unto God for it. These things are within the compass of natural abilities, and may be practised where there is no grace. It must aggravate your guilt, that you will not be at so much pains about the state and case of your precious souls. If you do not what you can, you will be condemned, not only for the want of grace, but for your despising it.

Objection 3. But all this is needless, seeing we are utterly unable to help ourselves out of the state of sin and wrath. *Answer.* Give not place to that delusion, which puts asunder what God hath joined, namely, the use of means, and a sense of our own impotency. If ever the spirit of God graciously influence your souls, you will become thoroughly sensible of your absolute inability, and yet enter upon a vigorous use of means. You will do for yourselves, as if you were to do all; and yet overlook all you do, as if you had done nothing. Will you do nothing for yourselves, because you cannot do all? Lay down no such impious conclusion against your own souls. Do what you can; and, it may be, while you are doing what you can for yourselves, God will do for you what you cannot. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" said Philip to the eunuch; "How can I," said he "except some man should guide me?" Acts viii. 30, 31. He could not understand the scripture he read, yet he could read it: he did what he could, he read; and while he was reading, God sent him an interpreter. The Israelites were in a great strait at the Red Sea; and how could they help themselves, when on the one hand were mountains, and on the other the enemy in pursuit; when Pharaoh and his host were behind them, and the Red Sea before them? What could they do?—"Speak unto the children of Israel," saith the Lord to Moses, "that they go forward," Exod. xiv. 15. For what end should they go forward? Can they make a passage to themselves through the sea? No; but let them go forward, saith the Lord: though they cannot turn the sea to dry land, yet they can go forward to the shore. So they did; and when they did what they could, God did for them what they could not do.

Question. Has God promised to convert and save those who, in the use of means, do what they can towards their own relief? *Answer.* We may not speak wickedly for God: natural men, being strangers to the covenant of promise, Eph. ii. 12, have no such promise made to them. Nevertheless they do not act rationally unless they exert the powers they have, and do what they can

For, 1. It is possible this course may succeed with them. If you do what you can, it may be, God will do for you what you cannot do for yourselves. This is sufficient to determine a man in a matter of the utmost importance, such as this is, Acts viii. 22, "Pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee." Joel ii. 14, "Who knoweth if he will return?" If success may be, the trial should be. If, in a wreck at sea, all the sailors and passengers betake themselves each to a broken board for safety; and one of them should see all the rest perish, notwithstanding their utmost endeavour to save themselves: yet the very possibility of escaping by that means, would determine that one still to do his best with his board. Why then do not you reason with yourselves, as the four lepers did, who sat at the gate of Samaria? 2 Kings vii. 3, 4. Why do you not say, "If we sit still," not doing what we can, "we die;" let us put it to a trial; if we be saved, "we shall live;" if not "we shall but die?" 2. It is probable this course may succeed; God is good and merciful; he loves to surprise men with his grace, and is often "found of them that sought him not," Isa. lxv. 1. If you do this, you are so far in the road of your duty; and you are using the means, which the Lord is wont to bless, for men's spiritual recovery: you lay yourselves in the way of the great Physician; and so it is probable you may be healed. Lydia went, with others, to the place "where prayer was wont to be made;" and "the Lord opened her heart," Acts xvi. 13, 14. You plough and sow, though nobody can tell you for certain that you will get so much as your seed again: you use means for the recovery of your health, though you are not sure they will succeed. In these cases probability determines you; and why not in this also? Importunity, we see, does very much with men: therefore pray, meditate, desire help of God; be much at the throne of grace, supplicating for grace; and do not faint. Though God regard you not, who in your present state are but one mass of sin, universally depraved, and vitiated in all the powers of your soul; yet he may regard prayer, meditation, and the like means of his own appointment, and he may bless them to you.—Wherefore, if you will not do what you can, you are not only dead, but you declare yourselves unworthy of eternal life.

To conclude.—Let the saints admire the freedom and power of grace, which came to them in their helpless condition, made their chains fall off, the iron gate to open to them; raised the fallen creatures, and brought them out of the state of sin and wrath, wherein they would have lain and perished, had not they been mercifully visited. Let the natural man be sensible of his utter inability to

recover himself. Know, that thou art without strength: and canst not come to Christ, till thou be drawn. Thou art lost, and canst not help thyself. This may shake the foundation of your hopes, if you never saw your absolute need of Christ and his grace, but think to contrive for yourself by your civility, morality, drowsy wishes, and duties; and by a faith and repentance, which have sprung out of your natural powers, without the power and efficacy of the grace of Christ. O be convinced of your absolute need of Christ, and his overcoming grace; believe your utter inability to recover yourself; that so you may be humbled, shaken out of your self-confidence, and lie down in dust and ashes, groaning out your miserable case before the Lord. A proper sense of your natural impotence, the impotence of depraved human nature, would be a step towards a delivery.

Thus far of man's natural state, the state of entire depravation.

STATE III.

THE STATE OF GRACE.

PART I.

ON REGENERATION.

1 Peter i. 23,

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

We proceed now to the state of grace, the state of begun recovery of human nature, into which all that shall partake of eternal happiness are translated, sooner or later, while in this world. It is the result of a gracious change made upon those who shall inherit eternal life: which change may be taken up in these two particulars: 1. In opposition to their natural real state, the state of corruption, there is a change made upon them in regeneration; whereby their nature is changed. 2. In opposition to their natural relative state, the state of wrath, there is a change made upon them in their union with the Lord Jesus Christ; by which they are placed beyond the reach of condemnation. These, therefore, regeneration and union with Christ, I desire to treat on as the great and comprehensive changes on a sinner, bringing him into the state of grace.

The first of these we have in the text; together with the outward and ordinary means by which it is brought about. The apostle here, to excite the saints to the study of holiness, and particularly of brotherly love, puts them in mind of their spiritual original. He tells them that they were born again; and that of incorruptible seed, the word of God. This shows them to be brethren, partakers of the same new nature: which is the root from which holiness, and particularly brotherly love, springs. We have been once born sinners: we must be born again, that we may be saints. The simple word signifies "to be begotten;" and so it may be read, Matth. xi. 11; "to be conceived," Matt. i. 20; and "to be born," Matt. ii. 1. Accordingly, the compound word, used in the text, may be taken in its full latitude, the last idea presupposing the two former: so regeneration is a supernatural real change on the whole man, fitly compared to the natural birth, as will afterwards appear. The

ordinary means of regenaration, called the "seed," whereof the new creature is formed, is not corruptible seed. Of such, indeed our bodies are generated: but the spiritual seed of which the new creature is generated, is incorruptible; namely, "the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The sound of the word of God passeth, even as other sounds do; but the word lasteth, liveth, and abideth, in respect of its everlasting effects, on all upon whom it operates. This "word, which by the gospel is preached unto you," ver. 25, impregnated by the Spirit of God, is the means of regeneration: and by it dead sinners are raised to life.

Doctrine. All men in the state of grace, are born again. All gracious persons, namely, such as are in a state of favour with God, and endowed with gracious qualities and dispositions, are regenerate persons. In discoursing on this subject, I shall shew, What regeneration is; next, Why it is so called; and then apply the doctrine.

I. Of the Nature of regeneration.

For the better understanding of the nature of regeneration, take this along with you, that as there are false conceptions in nature, so there are also in grace: by these many are deluded, mistaking some partial changes made upon them, for this great and thorough change. To remove such mistakes, let these few things be considered: (1.) Many call the church their mother, whom God will not own to be his children, Cant. i. 6. "My mother's children," that is, false brethren, "were angry with me." All that are baptized, are not born again. Simon was baptized, yet still "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity," Acts viii. 13, 23. Where Christianity is the religion of the country, many are called by the name of Christ, who have no more of him than the name: and no wonder, for the devil had his goats among Christ's sheep, in those places where but few professed the Christian religion, 1 John ii. 19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us." (2.) Good education is not regeneration. Education may chain up men's lusts, but cannot change their hearts. A wolf is still a ravenous beast, though it be in chains. Joash was very devout during the life of his good tutor Jehoiada; but afterwards he quickly shewed what spirit he was of, by his sudden apostasy, 2 Chron. xxiv. 2—18. Good example is of mighty influence to change the outward man: but that change often goes off, when a man changes his company; of which the world affords many sad instances. (3.) A turning from open profanity, to civility and sobriety, falls short of this saving change. Some are, for a while, very loose, especially in their younger years; but at length they reform, and leave their profane courses. Here is a change, yet only such as may be found in men utterly void of the

grace of God, and whose righteousness is so far from exceeding, that it doth not come up to the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. (4.) One may engage in all the outward duties of religion, and yet not be born again. Though lead be cast into various shapes, it remains still but a base metal. Men may escape the pollutions of the world, and yet be but dogs and swine, 2 Pet. ii. 20—22. All the external acts of religion are within the compass of natural abilities. Yea, hypocrites may have the counterfeit of all the graces of the Spirit: for we read of "true holiness," Eph. iv. 24; and "faith unfeigned," 1 Tim. i. 5; which shews us that there is counterfeit holiness, and a feigned faith. (5.) Men may advance to a great deal of strictness in their own way of religion, and yet be strangers to the new birth, Acts xxvi. 5, "After the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee." Nature has its own unsanctified strictness in religion. The Pharisees had so much of it, that they looked on Christ as little better than a mere libertine. A man whose conscience has been awakened, and who lives under the felt influence of the covenant of works, what will he not do that is within the compass of natural abilities? It is a truth, though it came out of a hellish mouth, that "skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life," Job ii. 4. (6.) A person may have sharp soul-exercises and pangs, and yet die in the birth. Many "have been in pain," that have but, "as it were, brought forth wind." There may be sore pangs of conscience, which turn to nothing at last. Pharaoh and Simon Magus had such convictions, as made them to desire the prayers of others for them. Judas repented himself: and, under terrors of conscience, gave back his ill-gotten pieces of silver. All is not gold that glitters. Trees may blossom fairly in the spring, on which no fruit is to be found in the harvest: and some have sharp soul-exercises, which are nothing but foretastes of hell.

The new birth, however in appearance hopefully begun, may be marred two ways. Some have sharp convictions for a while: but these go off, and they become as careless about their salvation, and as profane as ever, and usually worse than ever; "their last state is worse than their first," Matt. xii. 45. They get awakening grace, but not converting grace; and that goes off by degrees, as the light of the declining day, till it issues in midnight darkness. Others come forth too soon; they are born, like Ishmael, before the time of the promise, Gen. xvi. 2; compare Gal. iv. 22, &c. They take up with a mere law work, and stay not till the time of the promise of the gospel. They snatch at consolation, not waiting till it be given them; and foolishly draw their comfort from the law that wounded them. They apply the healing plaster to themselves, before their

wound, is sufficiently searched. The law, that rigorous husband, severely beats them, and throws in curses and vengeance upon their souls.; then they fall to reforming, praying, mourning, promising, and vowing, till this ghost be laid; which done, they fall asleep again in the arms of the law: but they are never shaken out of themselves and their own righteousness, nor brought forward to Jesus Christ. There may be a wonderful moving of the affections, in souls that are not at all touched with regenerating grace. When there is no grace, there may, notwithstanding, be a flood of tears, as in Esau, who "found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears," Heb. xii. 17. There may be great flashes of joy; as in the hearers of the word, represented in the parable of the stony ground, who "anon with joy receive it," Matt. xiii. 20. There may be also great desires after good things, and great delight in them too; as in those hypocrites described in Isa. lviii. 2, "Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways:—they take delight in approaching to God."—See how high they may sometimes stand, who yet fall away, Heb. vi. 4—6. They may be "enlightened, taste of the heavenly gift," "be partakers of the Holy Ghost, taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." Common operations of the divine Spirit, like a land-flood, make a strange turning of things upside down: but when they are over, all runs again in the ordinary channel. All these things may be, where the sanctifying Spirit of Christ never rests upon the soul, but the stony heart still remains; and in that case these affections cannot but wither, because they have no root.

But regeneration is a real, thorough change, whereby the man is made a new creature, 2 Cor. v. 17. The Lord God makes the creature a new creature, as the goldsmith melts down a vessel of dishonour, and makes it a vessel of honour. Man is, in respect of his spiritual state, altogether disjointed by the fall; every faculty of the soul is, as it were, dislocated: in regeneration, the Lord loosens every joint, and sets it right again. Now this change made in regeneration, is,

1. A change of qualities or dispositions: it is not a change of the substance, but of the qualities of the soul. Vicious qualities are removed, and the contrary dispositions are brought in, in their room. "The old man is put off," Eph. iv. 22; "the new man is put on," ver. 24. Man lost none of the rational faculties of his soul by sin: he had an understanding still, but it was darkened; he had still a will, but it was contrary to the will of God. So in regeneration, there is not a new substance created, but new qualities are infused; light instead of darkness, righteousness instead of unrighteousness.

2. It is a supernatural change; he that is born again, is born of the Spirit, John iii. 5. Great changes may be made by the power of nature, especially when assisted by external revelation. Nature may be so elevated by the common influences of the Spirit, that a person may thereby be turned into another man, as Saul was, 1 Sam. x. 6, who yet never becomes a new man. But in regeneration, nature itself is changed, and we become partakers of the divine nature; and this must needs be a supernatural change. How can we, who are dead in trespasses and sins, renew ourselves, any more than a dead man can raise himself out of his grave? Who but the sanctifying Spirit of Christ can form Christ in a soul, changing it into the same image? Who but the Spirit of sanctification can give the new heart? Well may we say, when we see a man thus changed, "This is the finger of God!"

3. It is a change into the likeness of God, 2 Cor. iii. 18, "We—beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." Every thing generates its like: the child bears the image of the parent; and they who are born of God, bear God's image. Man aspiring to be as God, made himself like the devil. In his natural state he resembles the devil, as a child doth his father, John viii. 44, "Ye are of your father the devil." But when this happy change comes, that image of Satan is defaced, and the image of God is restored. Christ himself, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, is the pattern after which the new creature is made, Rom. viii. 29, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Hence he is said to be formed in the regenerate, Gal. iv. 19.

4. It is a universal change; "all things become new," 2 Cor. v. 17. It is a blessed leaven, that leavens the whole lump, the whole spirit, and soul, and body. Original sin infects the whole man; and regenerating grace, which is the cure, goes as far as the disease. This fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness; goodness of the mind, goodness of the will, goodness of the affections, goodness of the whole man. He gets not only a new head, to know religion, or a new tongue, to talk of it; but a new heart, to love and embrace it, in the whole of his conversation. When the Lord opens the sluice of grace, on the soul's new-birth day, the waters run through the whole man, to purify and make him fruitful. In those natural changes spoken of before, there are, as it were, pieces of new cloth put into an old garment; new life to an old heart: but the gracious change is a thorough change; a change both of heart and life.

Yet, though every part of the man is renewed, there is no part of him perfectly renewed. As an infant has all the parts of a man

but none of them come to a perfect growth; so regeneration brings a perfection of parts, to be brought forward in the gradual advances of sanctification, 1 Pet. ii. 2, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Although, in regeneration, there is heavenly light let into the mind; yet there is still some darkness there: though the will is renewed, it is not perfectly renewed; there is still some of the old inclination to sin remaining: and thus it will be, till that which is in part is done away, and the light of glory come. Adam was created at his full stature; but those who are born, must have their time to grow up; so those who are born again, come forth into the new world of grace as new-born babes: Adam being created upright, was at the same time perfectly righteous, without the least mixture of sinful imperfection.

6. Nevertheless, it is a lasting change, which never goes off. The seed is incorruptible, saith the text; and so is the creature that is formed of it. The life given in regeneration, whatever decays it may fall under, can never be utterly lost. "His seed remaineth in him" who "is born of God," 1 John iii. 9. Though the branches should be cut down, the root abides in the earth; and being watered with the dew of heaven, shall spout again: for "the root of the righteous shall not be moved," Prov. xii. 3. But to come to particulars.

1. In regeneration the mind is savingly enlightened. There is a light let into the understanding; so that they who were "some time darkness, are now light in the Lord," Ephes. v. 8. The beams of the light of life make their way into the dark dungeon of the heart: then the night is over, and the morning light is come, which will shine more and more unto the perfect day. Now the man is illuminated,

(1.) In the knowledge of God. He has far other thoughts of God, than ever he had before, Hos. ii. 20, "I will even betrothe thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord." The Spirit of the Lord brings him back to this question, "What is God?" and catechises him anew upon that grand point, so that he is made to say, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee," Job xlii. 5. The spotless purity of God, his exact justice, his all-sufficiency, and other glorious perfections revealed in his word, are by this new light discovered to the soul, with a plainness and certainty, which as far exceed the knowledge it had of these things before, as ocular demonstration exceeds common report. For now he sees what he only heard of before.

(2.) He is enlightened in the knowledge of sin. He has different

thoughts of it than he used to have. Formerly his sight could not pierce through the cover Satan laid over it: but now the Spirit of God removes it, wipes off the paint and varnish; and so he sees it in its natural colours, as the worst of evils, exceedingly sinful, Rom. vii. 13. O what deformed monsters do formerly beloved lusts appear! Were they right eyes, he would pluck them out; were they right hands, he would consent to their being cut off. He sees how offensive sin is to God, how destructive it is to the soul; and calls himself a fool, for fighting so long against the Lord, and harbouring that destroyer as a bosom friend.

(3.) He is instructed in the knowledge of himself. Regenerating grace brings the prodigal to himself, Luke xv. 17, and makes men full of eyes within, knowing every one the plague of his own heart. The mind being savingly enlightened, the man sees how desperately corrupt his nature is; what enmity against God, and his holy law, has long lodged there: so that his soul loathes itself. No open sepulchre so vile and loathsome, in his eyes, as himself, Ezek. xxxvi. 31, "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight." He is no worse than he was before: but the sun is shining; and so those pollutions are seen, which he could not discern, when there was no dawning in him, as the word is, Isa. viii. 20, while as yet there was no breaking of the day of grace with him.

(4.) He is enlightened in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness: but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." The truth is, unregenerate men, though capable of preaching Christ, have not, properly speaking, the knowledge of him, but only an opinion, a good opinion, of him; as one has of many controverted points of doctrine, wherein he is far from certainty. As when you meet with a stranger on the road, who behaves himself discretely, you conceive a good opinion of him, and therefore willingly converse with him: but yet you will not commit your money to him; because, though you have a good opinion of the man, he is a stranger to you, you do not know him: so may they think well of Christ; but they will never commit themselves to him, seeing they know him not. But saving illumination carries the soul beyond opinion, to the certain knowledge of Christ and his excellency, 1 Thess. i. 5, "For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." The light of grace thus discovers the suitableness of the mystery of Christ to the divine perfections,

and to the sinner's case. Hence the regenerate admire the glorious plan of salvation, through Christ crucified; rest their whole dependence upon it, heartily acquiesce therein; for whatever he be to others, he is to them "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." But unrenewed men, not seeing this, are offended in him: they will not venture their souls in that vessel, but betake themselves to the broken boards of their own righteousness. The same light convincingly discovers a superlative worth, a transcendent glory and excellence in Christ, which darken all created excellencies as the rising sun makes the stars hide their heads: it engages the "merchantman to sell all that he hath, to buy the one pearl of great price," Matth. xii. 45, 46, makes the soul heartily content to take Christ for all, and instead of all. An unskilful merchant, to whom one offers a pearl of great price, for all his petty wares, dares not venture on the bargain; for though he thinks that one pearl may be worth more than all he has, yet he is not sure of it: but when a jeweller comes to him and assures him it is worth double all his wares, he then eagerly makes the bargain, and cheerfully parts with all he has for that pearl. Finally, this illumination in the knowledge of Christ, convincingly discovers to men a fulness in him, sufficient for the supply of all their wants, enough to satisfy the boundless desires of an immortal soul. And they are persuaded that such fulness is in him, and that in order to be communicated: they depend upon it as a certain truth; and therefore their souls take up their eternal rest in him.

(5.) The man is instructed in the knowledge of the vanity of the world, Psalm cxix. 96, "I have seen an end of all perfection." Regenerating grace elevates the soul, translates it into the spiritual world, from whence this earth cannot but appear a little, yea, a very little thing; even as heaven appeared before, while the soul was grovelling in the earth. Grace brings a man into a new world: where this world is reputed but a stage of vanity, a howling wilderness, a valley of tears. God has hung the sign of vanity at the door of all created enjoyments: yet how do men throng into the house, calling and looking for somewhat that is satisfying; even after it has been a thousand times told them, that there is no such thing in it, it is not to be got there, Isa. lvii. 10, "Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way: yet saidst thou not, There is no hope." Why are men so foolish? The truth of the matter lies here, they do not see by the light of grace, they do not spiritually discern that sign of vanity. They have often indeed made a rational discovery of it: but can that truly wean the heart from the world? Nay, no more than painted fire can burn off the prisoner's bands.

But the light of grace, is the light of life, powerful and efficacious.

(6.) To sum up all. In regeneration, the mind is enlightened in the knowledge of spiritual things, 1 John ii. 20, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One," that is, from Jesus Christ, Rev. iii. 18. It is an allusion to the sanctuary, whence the holy oil was brought to anoint the priest, "and ye know all things" necessary to salvation. Though men be not book-learned, if they are born again, they are Spirit-learned; for all such are taught of God, John vi. 45. The Spirit of regeneration teaches them what they knew not before and what they knew by the ear only, he teaches them over again as by the eye. The light of grace is an overcoming light, determining men to assent to divine truths on the mere testimony of God. It is no easy thing for the mind of man to acquiesce in divine revelation. Many pretend great respect to the Scriptures; whom, nevertheless, the clear Scripture testimony will not divorce from their preconceived opinions. But this illumination will make men's minds run, as willing captives, after Christ's chariot wheels, which they are ready to allow to drive ov r, and "cast down" their "imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God," 2 Cor. x. 5. It will bring them to "receive the kingdom of God as a little child," Mark x. 15, who thinks he has sufficient ground to believe any thing, if his father do but say it is so.

2. The will is renewed. The Lord takes away the stony heart, and gives a heart of flesh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, and so of stones raiseth up children to Abraham. Regenerating grace is powerful and efficacious, and gives the will a new turn. It does not indeed force it; but sweetly, yet powerfully draws it, so that his people are willing in the day of his power, Psalm cx. 3. There is heavenly oratory in the Mediators lips to persuade sinners, Psalm xlv. 2. "Grace is poured into thy lips." There are cords of a man, and bands of love in his hands, to draw them after him, Hos. xi. 4. Love makes a net for elect souls, which will infallibly catch them, and bring them to land. The cords of Christ's love are strong cords: and they need to be so, for every sinner is heavier than a mountain of brass; and Satan, together with the heart itself, draws the contrary way. But love is strong as death; and the Lord's love to the soul he died for, is the strongest love; which acts so powerfully, that it must come off victorious.

(1.) The will is cured of its utter inability to will what is good. While the opening of the prison to them that are bound, is proclaimed in the gospel, the Spirit of God comes and opens the prison door, goes to the prisoner, and, by the power of his grace, makes his chains fall off; breaks the bonds of iniquity, wherewith he was held

in sin, so as he could neither will nor do any thing truly good; brings him forth into a large place, "working in him both to will and to do of his good pleasure," Phil. ii. 13. Then it is that the soul, that was fixed to the earth, can move heavenward; the withered hand is restored, and can be stretched out.

(2.) There is wrought in the will a fixed aversion to evil. In regeneration, a man gets a new spirit put within him, Ezek. xxxvi. 26; and that spirit striveth against the flesh, Gal. v. 17. The sweet morsel of sin, so greedily swallowed down, he now loathes, and would fain be rid of it, even as willingly as one who had drunk a cup of poison would throw it up again. When the spring is stopped, the mud lies in the well unmoved; but when once the spring is cleared, the waters, springing up, will work the mud away by degrees. Even so, while a man continues in an unregenerate state, sin lies at ease in the heart; but as soon as the Lord strikes the rocky heart with the rod of his strength, in the day of conversion, grace is "in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life," John iv. 14, working away natural corruption, and gradually purifying the heart, Acts xv. 9. The renewed will riseth up against sin, strikes at the root thereof, and the branches too. Lusts are now grievous, and the soul endeavours to starve them; the corrupt nature is the source of all evil, and therefore the soul will be often laying it before the great Physician. O what sorrow, shame, and self-loathing fill the heart, in the day that grace makes its triumphant entrance into it! For now the madman is come to himself, and the remembrance of his follies cannot but cut him to the heart.

(3.) The will is endowed with an inclination, bent, and propensity to good. In its depraved state, it lay quite another way, being prone and bent to evil only: but now, by the operation of the omnipotent, all-conquering arm, it is drawn from evil to good, and gets another turn. As the former was natural, so this is natural too, in regard to the new nature given in regeneration, which has its holy strivings, as well as the corrupt nature has its sinful lustings, Gal. v. 17. The will, as renewed, points towards God and godliness. When God made man, his will, in respect of its intention, was directed towards God, as his chief end; in respect of its choice, it pointed towards that which God willed. When man unmade himself, his will was framed to the very reverse hereof: he made himself his chief end, and his own will his law. But when man is new made, in regeneration, grace rectifies this disorder in some measure, though not perfectly: because we are but renewed in part, while in this world. It brings back the sinner out of himself, to God, as his chief end, Psalm lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?

and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." Phil. i. 21, "For me to live is Christ." It makes him to deny himself, and whatever way he turns, to point habitually towards God, who is the centre of the gracious soul, its home, its "dwelling place in all generations," Psalm xc. 1. By regenerating grace, the will is brought into a conformity to the will of God. It is conformed to his preceptive will, being endowed with holy inclinations, agreeable to every one of his commands. The whole law is impressed on the gracious soul: every part of it is written on the renewed heart. Although remaining corruption makes such blots in the writing, that oft-times the man himself cannot read it, yet he that wrote it can read it at all times; it is never quite blotted out, nor can be. What he has written, he has written; and it shall stand: "For this is the covenant—I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts," Heb. viii. 10. It is a covenant of salt, a perpetual covenant. It is also conformed to his providential will; so that the man would no more be master of his own process, nor carve out his lot for himself. He learns to say, from his heart, "The will of the Lord be done." "He shall choose our inheritance for us," Psalm xlvii. 4. Thus the will is disposed to fall in with those things which, in its depraved state, it could never be reconciled to.

Particularly, 1. The soul is reconciled to the covenant of peace. The Lord God proposes a covenant of peace to sinners, a covenant which he himself has framed, and registered in the Bible: but they are not pleased with it. Nay, unregenerate hearts cannot be pleased with it. Were it put into their hands to frame it according to their minds, they would blot many things out of it which God has put in, and put in many things which God has kept out. But the renewed heart is entirely satisfied with the covenant, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; this is all my salvation, and all my desire." Though the covenant could not be brought down to their depraved will, their will is, by grace, brought up to the covenant: they are well pleased with it; there is nothing in it which they would have out; nor is any thing left out of it, which they would have in.—2. The will is disposed to receive Christ Jesus the Lord. The soul is content to submit to him. Regenerating grace undermines, and brings down the towering imaginations of the heart, raised up against its rightful Lord; it breaks the iron sinew, which kept the sinner from bowing to him; and disposes him to be no more stiff-necked, but to yield. He is willing to have on the yoke of Christ's commands, to take up the cross, and to follow him. He is content to take Christ on any terms, Psalm cx. 3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

The mind being savingly enlightened, and the will renewed, the sinner is thereby determined and enabled to answer the gospel call So the chief work in regeneration is done; the fort of the heart is taken; there is room made for the Lord Jesus Christ in the inmost parts of the soul; the inner door of the will being now opened to him, as well as the outer door of the understanding. In one word, Christ is passively received into the heart; he is come into the soul, by his quickening Spirit, whereby spiritual life is given to the man, who in himself was dead in sin. His first vital act we may conceive to be an active receiving of Jesus Christ, discerned in his glorious excellencies; that is a believing on him, a closing with him, as discerned, offered and exhibited in the word of his grace, the glorious Gospel: the immediate effect of which is union with him, John i. 12, 13, "To as many as received him to them gave he power," or privilege, "to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Eph. iii. 17, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Christ having taken the heart by storm, and triumphantly entered into it, in regeneration, the soul by faith yields itself to him, as it is expressed, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Thus, this glorious King who came into the heart, by his Spirit, dwells in it by faith. The soul being drawn runs; and being effectually called, comes.

3. In regeneration there is a happy change made on the affections; they are both rectified and regulated.

(1.) This change rectifies the affections, placing them on suitable objects. 2 Thess. iii. 5, "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God." The regenerate man's desires are rectified; they are set on God himself, and the things above. He, who before cried with the world, "Who will shew us any good?" has changed his note, and says, "Lord, lift up the light of thy countenance upon us,'" Psalm iv. 6. Before, he saw no beauty in Christ, for which he was to be desired; but now he is all he desires, he is altogether lovely, Cant. v. 16. The main stream of his desires is turned to run towards God; for there is the one thing he desires, Psalm xxvii. 4. He desires to be holy as well as happy; and rather to be gracious than great. His hopes, which before were low, and fastened down to things on earth, are now raised, and set on the glory which is to be revealed. He entertains the hope of eternal life, founded on the word of promise, Tit. i. 2. Which hope he has, as an anchor of the soul, fixing the heart under trials, Heb vi. 19. It puts him upon purifying himself, even as God is pure 1 John iii. 3. For he is begotten again unto a lively hope, 1 Pet. i. 3. His

love is raised, and set on God himself, Psalm xviii. 1; on his holy law, Psalm cxix. 97. Though it strike against his most beloved lust, he says, "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good," Rom. viii. 12. He loves the ordinances of God," Psalm lxxxiv. 1, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" Being passed from death unto life, he loves the brethren, 1 John iii. 14; the people of God, as they are called, 1 Pet. ii. 10. He loves God for himself; and what is God's, for his sake. Yea, as being a child of God, he loves his own enemies.—His heavenly Father is compassionate and benevolent: "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust:" therefore he is in like manner disposed, Matt. v. 44, 45. His hatred is turned against sin, in himself and others, Psalm ci. 3, "I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me." He groans under the body of it, and longs for deliverance, Rom. vii. 24, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" His joys and delights are in God the Lord, in the light of his countenance, in his law, and in his people, because they are like him. Sin is what he chiefly fears: it is a fountain of sorrow to him now, though formerly a spring of pleasure.

(2.) It regulates the affections placed on suitable objects. Our affections, when placed on the creature, are naturally exhorbitant: when we joy in it, we are apt to overjoy; and when we sorrow, we are ready to sorrow overmuch: but grace bridles these affections, clips their wings, and keeps them within bounds, that they overflow not all their banks. It makes a man "hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children; yea, and his own life also," comparatively; that is, to love them less than he loves God, Luke xiv. 26. It also rectifies lawful affections; bringing them forth from right principles, and directing them to right ends. There may be unholy desires after Christ and his grace; as when men desire Christ, not from any love to him, but merely out of love to themselves. "Give us of your oil," said the foolish virgins, "for our lamps are gone out," Matt. xxv. 8. There may be an unsanctified sorrow for sin; as when one sorrows for it, not because it is displeasing to God, but only because of the wrath annexed to it, as did Pharaoh, Judas, and others. So a man may love his father and mother from mere natural principles, without any respect to the command of God binding him thereto. But grace sanctifies the affections, in such cases, making them to run in a new channel of love to God, respect to his commands, and regard to his glory. Again, grace raises the affections where they are too low. It gives the chief seat in them to God, and pulls down all other rivals, whether persons or things,

making them lie at his feet. Psalm lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." He is loved for himself, and other persons or things for his sake. What is lovely in them, to the renewed heart, is some ray of the divine goodness appearing in them: for unto gracious souls they shine only by borrowed light. This accounts for the saints loving all men; and yet hating those that hate God, and contemning the wicked as vile persons. They hate and contemn them for their wickedness; there is nothing of God in that, and therefore nothing lovely nor honourable in it: but they love them for their commendable qualities or perfections, whether natural or moral; because, in whomsoever these are, they are from God, and can be traced to him as their fountain.

Finally, regenerating grace sets the affections so firmly on God, that the man is disposed, at God's command, to quit his hold of every thing else, in order to keep his hold of Christ; to hate father and mother, in comparison with Christ, Luke xiv. 26. It makes even lawful enjoyments, like Joseph's mantle to hang loose about a man, that he may quit them, when he is in danger of being ensnared by holding them.

If the stream of our affections were never turned, we are, doubtless, going down the stream into the pit. If "the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life," have the throne in our hearts, which should be possessed by the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; if we never had so much love to God, as to ourselves; if sin has been somewhat bitter to us, but never so bitter as suffering, never so bitter as the pain of being weaned from it; truly we are strangers to this saving change.—For grace turns the affections upside down, whenever it comes into the heart.

4. The conscience is renewed. As a new light is set up in the soul, in regeneration, conscience is enlightened, instructed and informed. That candle of the Lord, Prov. xx. 27, is now snuffed and brightened; so that it shines, and sends forth its light into the most retired corners of the heart; discovering sins which the soul was not aware of before: and, in a special manner, discovering the corruption or depravity of nature, that seed and spawn whence all actual sins proceed. This produces the new complaint, Rom. vii. 24, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Conscience, which lay sleeping in the man's bosom before, is now awakened, and makes its voice to be heard through the whole soul; therefore there is no more rest for him in the sluggard's bed; he must get up and be doing, arise, "haste, and escape for his life." It powerfully incites to obedience, even

in the most spiritual acts, which lie not within the view of the natural conscience; and powerfully restrains from sin, even from those sins which do not lie open to the observation of the world. It urges the sovereign authority of God, to which the heart is now reconciled, and which it willingly acknowledges: and so it engages the man to his duty, whatever be the hazard from the world; for it fills the heart so with the fear of God, that the force of the fear of man is broken. This has engaged many to put their life in their hand, and follow the cause of religion, which they once contemned, and resolutely walk in the path they formerly abhorred, Gal. i. 23, "He which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed." Guilt now makes the conscience smart. It has bitter remorse for sins past, which fills the soul with anxiety, sorrow, and self-loathing. And every new reflection on these sins is apt to affect, and make its wounds bleed afresh with regret. It is made tender, in point of sin and duty, for the time to come: being once burnt, it dreads the fire, and fears to break the hedge where it was formerly bit by the serpent. Finally, the renewed conscience drives the sinner to Jesus Christ, as the only Physician who can draw out the sting of guilt; and whose blood alone can purge the conscience from dead works, Heb. ix. 14, refusing all ease offered to it from any other hand. This is an evidence that the conscience is not only fired, as it may be in an unregenerate state, but oiled also, with regenerating grace.

5. As the memory wanted not its share of depravity, it is also bettered by regenerating grace. The memory is weakened, with respect to those things that are not worth their room therein; and men are taught to forget injuries, and drop their resentments, Matt. v. 44, 45, "Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you—that ye may be," that is, appear to be, "the children of your Father which is in heaven." It is strengthened for spiritual things. We have Solomon's receipt for an ill memory, Prov. iii. 1, "My son," saith he, "forget not my law." But how shall it be kept in mind? "Let thine heart keep my commandments." Grace makes a heart-memory, even where there is no good head-memory, Psalm cxix. 11, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart." The heart, truly touched with the powerful sweetness of truth, will help the memory to retain what is so relished. If divine truths made deeper impressions on our hearts, they would impress themselves with more force on our memories, Psalm cxix. 93, "I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me." Grace sanctifies the memory. Many have large, but unsanctified memories, which serve only to gather knowledge, whereby to aggravate their condem-

nation: but the renewed memory serves to "remember his commandments to do them," Psalm ciii. 18. It is a sacred storehouse, from whence a Christian is furnished in his way to Zion; for faith and hope are often supplied out of it, in a dark hour. It is the storehouse of former experiences; and these are the believer's way-marks, by noticing of which he comes to know where he is, even in a dark time. Psalm xlii. 6, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan," &c. It also helps the soul to godly sorrow and self-loathing, presenting old guilt anew before the conscience, and making it bleed afresh, though the sin be already pardoned; Psalm xxv. 7, "Remember not the sins of my youth." Where unpardoned guilt is lying on the sleeping conscience, it is often employed to bring in a word, which in a moment sets the whole soul on the stir; as when "Peter remembered the words of Jesus—he went out and wept bitterly," Matt. xxvi. 75. The word of God laid up in a sanctified memory, serves a man to resist temptations, puts the sword in his hand against his spiritual enemies, and is a light to direct his steps in the way of religion and righteousness.

6. There is a change made on the body, and the members thereof, in respect of their use; they are consecrated to the Lord. Even "the body is—for the Lord," 1 Cor. vi. 13. It is "the temple of the Holy Ghost," ver. 19. The members thereof, that were formerly "instruments of unrighteousness unto sin," become "instruments of righteousness unto God," Rom. vi. 13, "servants to righteousness unto holiness," ver. 19. The eye, that conveyed sinful imaginations into the heart, is under a covenant, Job xxxi. 1, to do so no more; but to serve the soul, in viewing the works, and reading the word, of God. The ear, that had often been death's porter, to let in sin, is turned to be the gate of life, by which the word of life enters the soul. The tongue, that set on fire the whole course of nature, is restored to the office it was designed for by the Creator; namely, to be an instrument of glorifying him, and setting forth his praise. In a word, the whole man is for God, in soul and body, which by this blessed change are made his.

7. This gracious change shines forth in the conversation. Even the outward man is renewed. A new heart makes newness of life. When "the king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold," Psalm xlv. 13. "The single eye" makes "the whole body full of light," Matt. vi. 22. This change will appear in every part of a man's conversation; particularly in the following things.

(1.) In the change of his company. Formerly, he despised the

company of the saints, but now they are "the excellent, in whom is all his delight," Psalm xvi. 3. "I am a companion of all that fear thee, saith the royal psalmist, Psalm cxix. 63. A renewed man joins himself with the saints; for he and they are like-minded, in that which is their main work and business; they have all one new nature: they are travelling to Immanuel's land, and converse together in the language of Canaan. In vain do men pretend to religion, while ungodly company is their choice; for "a companion of fools shall be destroyed," Prov. xiii. 20. Religion will make a man shy of throwing himself into an ungodly family, or any unnecessary familiarity with wicked men; as one who is healthy will beware of going into an infected house.

(2.) In his relative capacity, he will be a new man. Grace makes men gracious in their several relations, and naturally leads them to the conscientious performance of relative duties. It does not only make good men and good women, but makes good subjects, good husbands, good wives, children, servants, and, in a word, good relatives in the church, commonwealth, and family. It is a just exception made against the religion of many, namely that they are bad relatives, they are ill husbands, wives, masters, servants, &c. How can we prove ourselves to be new creatures, if we be just such as we were before, in our several relations? 2 Cor. v. 17, "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are past away; behold, all things are become new." Real godliness will gain a testimony to a man, from the consciences of his nearest relations; though they know more of his sinful infirmities than others do, as we see in the case, 2 Kings iv. 1, "Thy servant my husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord."

(3.) In the way of his following his wordly business, there is a great change. It appears to be no more his all, as it was before. Though saints apply themselves to worldly business, as well as others, yet their hearts are not swallowed up in it. It is evident that they are carrying on a trade with heaven, as well as a trade with earth, Phil. iii. 20, "For our conversation is in heaven," They go about their employment in the world, as a duty laid upon them by the Lord of all, doing their lawful business as the will of God, Eph. vi. 7, working, because he has said, "Thou shalt not steal."

(4.) Such have a special concern for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in the world: they espouse the interests of religion, and "prefer Jerusalem above their chief joy," Psalm cxxxvii. 6. How privately soever they live, grace gives them a public spirit,

will concern itself in the ark and work of God, in the Gospel of God, and in the people of God, even in those of them whom they never saw. As children of God, they naturally care for these things. They have a new concern for the spiritual good of others: no sooner do they taste of the power of grace themselves, but they are inclined to set up to be agents for Christ and holiness in the world; as appears in the case of the woman of Samaria, who when Christ had manifested himself to her, "went her way into the city, and said unto the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" John iv. 28, 29. They have seen and felt the evil of sin, and therefore pity the world lying in wickedness. They would fain pluck the brands out of the fire, remembering that they themselves were plucked out of it. They labour to commend religion to others, both by word and example; and rather deny themselves the liberty in indifferent things, than, by the uncharitable use of it, destroy others; 1 Cor viii. 13, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

(5.) In their use of lawful comforts, there is a great change. They rest not in them, as their end; but use them as means to help them in their way. They draw their satisfaction from the higher springs even while lower springs are running. Thus Hannah having obtained a son, rejoiced not so much in the gift, as in the giver, 1 Sam. ii. 1, "And Hannah prayed and said, My heart rejoiceth in the Lord." Yea, when the comforts of life are gone, they can subsist without them, and "rejoice in the Lord although the fig-tree do not blossom," Hab. iii. 17, 18. Grace teaches to use the conveniences of the present life as pilgrims; and to shew a holy moderation in all things. The heart, which formally revelled in these things without fear, is now shy of being over much pleased with them. Being apprehensive of danger, it uses them warily; as the dogs of Egypt run, while they lap their water out of the river Nile, for fear of the crocodiles that are in it.

(6.) This change shines forth in the man's performance of religious duties. He who lived in the neglect of them will do so no more, if once the grace of God enter into his heart. If a man be new-born, he will desire the sincere milk of the word, 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3. Whenever the prayerless person gets the Spirit of grace, he will be in him a Spirit of supplication, Zech. xii. 10. It is as natural for one that is born again to pray, as for the new-born babe to cry. Acts ix. 11, "Behold, he prayeth!" His heart will be a temple for God, and his house a church. His devotion, which before was superficial and formal, is now spiritual and lively; for as

much as heart and tongue are touched with a live coal from heaven: and he rests not in the mere performance of duties, as careful only to get his task done, but in every duty seeks communion with God in Christ; justly considering them as means appointed of God for that end, and reckoning himself disappointed if he miss of it. Thus far of the nature of regeneration.

II. I come to shew why this change is called regeneration a being born again. It is so called, because of the resemblance between natural and spiritual generation, which lies in the following particulars.

1. Natural generation is a mysterious thing: and so is spiritual generation, John iii. 8, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The work of the Spirit is felt; but his way of working is a mystery we cannot comprehend. A new light is let into the mind, and the will is renewed; but how that light is conveyed thither, how the will is fettered with cords of love, and how the rebel is made a willing captive, we can no more tell, than we can tell "how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child," Eccl. xi. 5. As a man hears the sound of the wind, and finds it stirring, but knows not where it begins, and where it ends; "so is every one that is born of the Spirit:" he finds the change that is made upon him; but how it is produced he knoweth not. One thing he may know that whereas he was blind, now he seeth: but "the seed of grace" "springs and grows up, he knoweth not how," Mark iv. 26, 27.

2. In both, the creature comes to a being it had not before. The child is not, till it be generate; and a man has no gracious being, no being in grace, till he is regenerate. Regeneration is not so much the curing of a sick man, as "the quickening of a dead man," Eph. ii. 1—5. Man in his depraved state, is a mere nonentity in grace, and is brought into a new being by the power of Him "who calleth things that be not as though they were;" being "created in Jesus Christ unto good works," Eph. ii. 10. Therefore our Lord Jesus, to give ground of hope to the Laodiceans, in their wretched and miserable state, proposes himself as "the beginning of the creation of God," Rev. iii. 14, namely, the active beginning of it; "for all things were made by him" at first, John i. 3. From whence they might gather, that as he made them when they were nothing, he could make them over again, when worse than nothing; the same hand that made them his creatures, could make them new creatures.

As the child is passive in generation, so is the child of God in

regeneration. The one contributes nothing to its own generation; neither does the other contribute any thing, by way of efficiency, to its own regeneration: for though a man may lay himself down at the pool, yet he hath no hand in moving the water, no power in performing the cure. One is born the child of a king, another the child of a beggar: the child has no hand at all in this difference. God leaves some in their depraved state; others he brings into a state of grace, or regeneracy. If thou be thus honoured, no thanks to thee; for "who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" 1 Cor. iv. 7.

4. There is a wonderful contexture of parts in both births. Admirable is the structure of man's body, in which there is such a variety of organs; nothing wanting, nothing superfluous. The psalmist, considering his own body, looks on it as a piece of marvellous work; "I am fearfully and wonderfully made," saith he, Psalm cxxxix. 14, "and curiously wrought in the lower parts of the earth," ver. 15; that is, in the womb, where I know not how the bones grow, any more than I know what is doing in the lowest parts of the earth. In natural generation we are curiously wrought, like a piece of needle-work; as the word imports: even so it is in regeneration: Psalm xlv. 14, "She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work," raiment curiously wrought. It is the same word in both texts. What that raiment is, the apostle tells us, Eph. iv. 24. It is "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." This is the raiment which he saith, in the same place, we must put on; not excluding the imputed righteousness of Christ. Both are curiously wrought, as masterpieces of the manifold wisdom of God. O the wonderful contexture of graces in the new creature! O glorious creature, new-made after the image of God! It is grace for grace in Christ, which makes up this new man, John i. 16; even as in bodily generation, the child has member for member in the parent; has every member which the parent has in a certain proportion.

5. All this, in both cases, has its rise from that which is in itself very small and inconsiderable. O the power of God, in making such a creature of the corruptible seed, and much more in bringing forth the new creature from such small beginnings! It is as "the little cloud, like a man's hand," which spread, till "heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain," 1 Kings xviii. 44, 45. A man gets a word at a sermon, which hundreds besides him hear, and let slip: but it remains with him, works in him, and never leaves him, till the little world is turned upside down by it; that is, till he becomes a new man. It is like the vapour that

got up into Ahasuerus's head, and cut off sleep from his eyes, Esth. vi. 1, which proved a spring of such motions as never ceased, until Mordecai, in royal pomp, was brought on horseback through the streets, proud Haman trudging at his foot; the same Haman afterwards hanged, Mordecai advanced, and the church delivered from Haman's hellish plot. "The grain of mustard seed becometh a tree," Mat. xiii. 31, 32. God loves to bring great things out of small beginnings.

6. Natural generation is carried on by degrees. Job x. 10, "Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese?" So is regeneration. It is with the soul, ordinarily, in regeneration, as with the blind man cured by our Lord, who first "saw men as trees walking," afterward "saw every man clearly," Mark viii. 23—25. It is true, regeneration being, strictly speaking, a passage from death to life, the soul is quickened in a moment; like as when the embryo is brought to perfection in the womb, the soul is infused into the lifeless lump. Nevertheless, we may imagine somewhat like conception in spiritual regeneration, whereby the soul is prepared for quickening; and the new creature is capable of growth, 1 Peter ii. 2, and of having life more abundantly, John x. 10.

7. In both there are new relations. The regenerate may call God, Father; for they are his children, John i. 12, 13, "begotten of him," 1 Pet. i. 3. The bride, the Lamb's wife, that is, the church, is their mother, Gal. iv. 26. They are related, as brethren and sisters, to angels and glorified saints; "the family of heaven." They are of the heavenly stock: the meanest of them, "the base things of the world," 1 Cor. i. 28, the kinless things, as the word imports, who cannot boast of the blood that runs in their veins, are yet, by their new birth, near of kin with the excellent in the earth.

8. There is a likeness between the parent and the child. Every thing that generates, generates its like; and the regenerate are "partakers of the divine nature," 2 Peter i. 4. The moral perfections of the divine nature are, in measure and degree, communicated to the renewed soul: thus the divine image is restored; so that, as the child resembles the father, the new creature resembles God himself, being holy as he is holy.

9. As there is no birth without pain, both to the mother and to the child, so there is great pain in bringing forth the new creature. The children have more or less of these birth-pains, whereby they are "pricked in their heart," Acts ii. 37. The soul has sore pains when under conviction and humiliation. "A wounded spirit who can bear?" The mother is pained; "Zion travails," Isaiah lxvi. 8.

She sighs, groans, cries, and has hard labour, in her ministers and members, to bring forth children to her Lord, Gal. iv. 19, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." Never was a mother more feelingly touched with "joy, that a man child is born into the world," than she is upon the new birth of her children. But, what is more remarkable than all this, we read not only of our Lord Jesus Christ's "travail," or toil "of soul," Isaiah liii. 11, but, what is more directly to our purpose, of his "pains," or pangs, as of one travailing in childbirth; so the word used, Acts ii. 24, properly signifies. Well might he call the new creature, as Rachel called her dear-bought son, Benoni, that is, the son of my sorrow; and as she called another, Naphtali, that is, my wrestling: for the pangs of that travail put him to "strong crying and tears," Heb. v. 7; yea, into an "agony and bloody sweat," Luke xxii. 44. And in the end he died of these pangs; they became to him "the pains of death," Acts ii. 24.

I shall now apply this doctrine.

Use I. By what is said, you may try whether you are in the state of grace or not. If you are brought out of the state of wrath or ruin, into the state of grace or salvation, you are new creatures, you are born again. But you will say, How shall we know whether we are born again, or not? *Answer.* Were you to ask me, if the sun were risen, and how you should know whether it were risen or not? I would bid you look up to the heavens, and see it with your eyes. And, would you know if the light be risen in your heart? Look in, and see. Grace is light, and discovers itself. Look into thy mind, see if it has been illuminated in the knowledge of God. Hast thou been inwardly taught what God is? Were thine eyes ever turned inward to see thyself; the sinfulness of thy depraved state, the corruption of thy nature; the sins of thy heart and life? Wast thou ever led into a view of the exceeding sinfulness of sin? Have thine eyes seen King Jesus in his beauty; the manifold wisdom of God in him, his transcendent excellence, and absolute fulness and sufficiency, with the vanity and emptiness of all things else? Next, What change is there on thy will? Are the fetters taken off, wherewith it was formerly bound up from moving heavenward? Has thy will got a new turn? Dost thou find an aversion to sin, and an inclination to good, wrought in thy heart? Is thy soul turned towards God, as thy chief end? Is thy will new-moulded into some measure of conformity to the preceptive and providential will of God? Art thou heartily reconciled to the covenant of peace, and fixedly disposed to the receiving of Christ, as he is offered in

the gospel? And as to a change on your affections, are they rectified, and placed on right objects? Are your desires going out after God? Are they to his name, and the remembrance of him? Isaiah xxvi. 8. Are your hopes in him? Is your love set upon him, and your hatred set against sin? Does your offending a good God affect your heart with sorrow, and do you fear sin more than suffering? Are your affections regulated? Are they, with respect to created comforts, brought down, as being too high; and with respect to God in Christ, raised up, as being too low? Has he the chief seat in your heart? And are all your lawful worldly comforts and enjoyments laid at his feet? Has thy conscience been enlightened and awakened, refusing all ease, but from the application of the blood of a Redeemer? Is thy memory sanctified, thy body consecrated to the service of God? And art thou now walking in newness of life? Thus you may discover whether you are born again or not.

But, for your farther help in this matter, I will discourse a little of another sign of regeneration, namely, the love of the brethren; an evidence whereby the weakest and most timorous saints have often had comfort, when they could have little or no consolation from other marks proposed to them. This the apostle lays down, 1 John iii. 14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." It is not to be thought that the apostle, by the brethren in this place means brethren by a common relation to the first Adam, but to the second Adam, Christ Jesus; because, however true it is, that universal benevolence, a good will to the whole race of mankind, takes place in the renewed soul, as being a lively lineament of the divine image, yet the whole context speaks of those that are "the sons of God," ver. 1, 2; "children of of God," ver. 10; "born of God," ver. 9; distinguishing between "the children of God," and "the children of the devil," ver. 10; between those that are "of the devil," ver. 8, 12, and those that are "of God," ver. 10. The text itself comes in as a reason why we should not marvel that the world hates the brethren, the children of God, ver. 13. How can we marvel at it, seeing the love of the brethren is an evidence of one's having passed from death to life? Therefore it were absurd to look for that love amongst the men of the world, who are dead in trespasses and sins. They cannot love the brethren; no wonder, then, that they hate them. Wherefore it is plain, that by brethren here, are meant brethren by regeneration.

Now, in order to set this mark of regeneration in a true light, consider these three things. 1. This love to the brethren, is a love to them as such. Then do we love them in the sense of the text,

when the grace, or image of God in them, is the chief motive of our love to them. When we love the godly for their godliness, the saints for their sanctity or holiness, then we love God in them, and so may conclude were born of God; for "every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him," 1 John v. 1. Hypocrites may love saints, on account of civil relations to them; because of their obliging conversation; for their being of the same opinion as to outward religious matters; and on many other such like accounts, whereby wicked men may be induced to love the godly. But happy they who love them merely for grace in them; for their heaven-born temper and disposition; who can pick this pearl even out of infirmities in and about them; lay hold of it, and love them for it. 2. It is a love that will be given to all in whom the grace of God appears. They that love one saint, because he is a saint, will have "love to all the saints," Eph. i. 15. They will love all, who, in their view, bear the image of God. Those that cannot love a gracious person in rags, but confine their love to those of them who wear gay clothing, have not this love to the brethren in them. Those who confine their love to a party, to whom God has not confined his grace, are souls too narrow to be put among the children. In what points soever men differ from us, in their judgment or way; yet if they appear to agree with us, in love to God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and in bearing his image, we shall love them as brethren, if we are of the heavenly family. 3. If this love be in us, the more grace any person appears to be possessed of, he will be the more beloved by us. The more vehemently the holy fire of grace doth flame in any, the hearts of true Christians will be the more warmed in love to them.—It is not with the saints as with many other men, who make themselves the standards for others; and love them so far as they think they are like themselves. But, if they seem to outshine and darken them, their love is turned to hatred and envy, and they endeavour to detract from the due praise of their exemplary piety; because nothing relisheth with them, in the practice of religion, that goes beyond their own measure; what of the life and power of religion appears in others, serves only to raise the serpentine grudge in their pharisaical hearts. But as for those who are born again, their love and affection to the brethren bears proportion to the degrees of the divine image they discern in them.

Now, if you would improve these to the knowledge of your state, I would advise you, 1. To set apart some time, when you are at home, for a review of your case, to try your state by what has been said. Many have comfort and clearness as to their state, at a ser-

mon, who in a little time lose it again; because while they hear the word preached, they make application of it; but do not consider these things more deliberately and leisurely when alone. The impression is too sudden and short to give lasting comfort; and it is often so inconsiderate, that it has bad consequences. Therefore set about this work at home, after earnest and serious prayer to God for his help in it. Complain not of your want of time while the night follows the busy day; nor of place, while fields and outhouses are to be got. 2. Renew your repentance before the Lord. Guilt lying on the conscience, unrepented of, may darken all your evidences and marks of grace. It provokes the Spirit of grace to withdraw; and when he goes, our light ceases. It is not a fit time for a saint to read his evidences, when the candle is blown out by some conscience-wounding guilt. 3. Exert the powers of the new nature; let the graces of the divine Spirit discover themselves in you by action. If you would know whether there is sacred fire in your breast, or not, you must blow the coal; for although it exist, and be a live coal, yet if it be under the ashes, it will give you no light. Settle in your hearts a firm purpose, through the grace that is in Christ Jesus, to comply with every known duty, and watch against every known sin, having readiness of mind to be instructed in what you know not. If gracious souls would thus manage their inquiries into their state, it is likely that they would have a comfortable issue. And if others would take such a solemn review, and make trial of their state, impartially examining themselves before the tribunal of their consciences, they might have a timely discovery of their own sinfulness; but the neglect of self-examination leaves most men under sad delusions as to their state, and deprives many saints of the comfortable sight of the grace of God in them.

But that I may afford some farther help to true Christians in their inquiries into their state, I shall propose and briefly answer some cases or doubts, which may possibly hinder some persons from the comfortable view of their happy state. The children's bread must not be withheld; though, while it is held forth to them, the dogs should snatch at it.

Case 1. "I doubt if I be regenerate, because I know not the precise time of my conversion; nor can I trace the particular steps of the way in which it was brought to pass." *Answer.* Though it is very desirable to be able to give an account of the beginning, and the gradual advances, of the Lord's work upon our souls, as some saints can distinctly do, the manner of the Spirit's working being still a mystery, yet this is not necessary to prove the truth of grace.

Happy he that can say, in this case, as the blind man in the Gospel, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. As, when we see flame, we know there is fire, though we know not how or when it began; so the truth of grace may be discerned in us, though we know not how or when it was dropped into our hearts. If thou canst perceive the happy change which is wrought on thy soul; if thou findest thy mind is enlightened, thy will inclined to comply with the will of God in all things; especially to fall in with the divine plan of salvation, through a crucified Redeemer; in vain dost thou trouble thyself, and refuse comfort, because thou knowest not how and what way it was brought about.

Case 2. "If I were a new creature, sin could not prevail against me as it doth." *Answer.* Though we must not lay pillows for hypocrites to rest their heads upon, who indulge themselves in their sins, and make the doctrine of God's grace subservient to their lusts, lying down contentedly in the bond of iniquity like men that are fond of golden chains; yet it must be owned, "the just man falleth seven times a-day; and iniquity may prevail against the children of God. But if thou art groaning under the weight of the body of death, the corruption of thy nature; loathing thyself for the sins of thy heart and life; striving to mortify thy lusts; fleeing daily to the blood of Christ for pardon; and looking to his spirit for sanctification: though thou mayest be obliged to say with the Psalmist, "Iniquities prevail against me;" yet thou mayest add with him, "As for our transgressions thou shalt purge them away, Psal. lxv. 3. The new creature does not yet possess the house alone: it dwells by the side of an ill neighbour, namely, remaining corruption, the relics of depraved nature. They struggle together for the mastery: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh," Gal. v. 17. And sometimes corruption prevails, bringing the child of God into captivity to the law of sin, Rom. vii. 23. Let not therefore the prevailing of corruption make thee, in this case, conclude thou art none of God's children: but let it humble thee, to be the more watchful, and to thirst the more intensely after Jesus Christ, his blood and Spirit; and that very disposition will evidence a principle of grace in thee, which seeks the destruction of sin that prevails so often against thee.

Case 3. "I find the motions of sin in my heart more violent since the Lord began his work on my soul, than they were before that time. Can this consist with a change of my nature?" *Answer.* Dreadful is the case of many, who, after God has had a remarkable dealing with their souls, tending to their reformation, have thrown off all bonds, and have become grossly and openly immoral and

profane; as if the devil had returned into their hearts with seven spirits worse than himself. All I shall say to such persons is, that their state is exceedingly dangerous; they are in danger of sinning against the Holy Ghost, therefore let them repent, before it be too late. But if it be not thus with you; though corruption is stirring itself more violently than formerly, as if all the forces of hell were raised, to hold fast, or bring back, a fugitive; yet these stirrings may consist with a change of your nature. When the restraint of grace is newly laid upon corruption, it is no wonder if it acts more vigorously than before, "warring against the law of the mind," Rom. vii. 23. The motions of sin may really be most violent, when the new principle is brought in to cast it out. The sun sending its beams through the window, discovers the motes in the house, and their motions, which were not seen before; so the light of grace may discover the risings and actings of corruption, in another manner than ever the man saw them before, though they really do not rise nor act more vigorously. Sin is not quite dead in the regenerate soul; it is but dying, and dying a lingering death, being crucified; no wonder there are great fightings, when it is sick at the heart, and death is at the door. Besides, temptations may be more in number, and stronger, while Satan is striving to bring you back, who are escaped, than while he only endeavoured to retain you: "After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction," says the apostle to the Hebrews, chap. x. 32. But "cast not away your confidence," ver. 35. Remember his "grace is sufficient for you, and the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Pharaoh and his Egyptians never made such a formidable appearance against the Israelites, as at the Red Sea, after they were brought out of Egypt: but then were the pursuers nearest to a total overthrow, Exod. chap. xiv. Let not this case, therefore, make you raze the foundations of your trust; but be ye emptied of self, and strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and you shall come off victorious.

Case 4. "But when I compare my love to God with my love to some created enjoyments, I find the pulse of my affections beat stronger to the creature than to the Creator. How then can I call him Father? Nay, alas! those turnings of heart within me, and glowings of affection to him, which I had, are gone; so that I fear all the love which I ever had to the Lord has been but a fit and flash of affection, such as hypocrites often have. *Answer.* It cannot be denied, that the predominant love of the world is a certain mark of an unregenerate state, 1 John ii. 15, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Nevertheless, those

are not always the strongest affections which are most violent. A man's affections may be more moved, on some occasions, by an object that is little regarded, than by another that is exceedingly beloved; even as a little brook sometimes makes more noise than a great river. The strength of our affections is to be measured by the firmness and fixedness of the root, not by the violence of their actings. Suppose a person meeting with a friend, who has been long abroad, finds his affections more vehemently acting towards his friend on that occasion, than towards his own wife and children; will he therefore say, that he loves his friend more than them? Surely not. Even so, although the Christian may find himself more moved in his love to the creature, than in his love to God; yet it is not therefore to be said, that he loves the creature more than God, seeing love to God is always more firmly rooted in a gracious heart, than love to any created enjoyment whatever; as appears when competition arises in such a manner, that the one or other is to be foregone. Would you then know your case? Retire into your own hearts, and there lay the two in the balance, and try which of them weighs down the other. Ask thyself, as in the sight of God, whether thou wouldst part with Christ for the creature, or part with the creature for Christ, if thou wert left to thy choice in the matter? If you find your heart disposed to part with what is dearest to you in the world for Christ at his call, you have no reason to conclude you love the creature more than God; but, on the contrary, that you love God more than the creature, although you do not feel such violent motions in the love of God, as in the love of some created thing, Matt. x. 37, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." Luke xiv. 26, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother—he cannot be my disciple." From which texts compared we may infer, that he who hates, that is, is ready to part with, father and mother for Christ, is, in our Lord's account, one that loves them less than him, and not one who loves father and mother more than him. Moreover, you are to consider that there is a twofold love to Christ. 1. There is a sensible love to him, which is felt as a dart in the heart, and makes a holy love-sickness in the soul, arising from want of enjoyment, as in that case of the spouse, Cant. v. 8, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love:" or else from the fulness of it, as in Cant. ii. 5, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love." These glowings of affection are usually wrought in young converts, who are ordinarily made "to sing in the days of their youth," Hos. ii. 15. While the fire-edge is upon the young convert, he looks upon others, reputed

to be godly, and not finding them in such a temper or disposition as himself, he is ready to censure them; and to think there is far less religion in the world than indeed there is. But when his own cup comes to settle below the brim, and he finds that in himself which made him question the state of others, he is more humbled, and feels more and more the necessity of daily recourse to the blood of Christ for pardon, and to the Spirit of Christ for sanctification; and thus grows downwards in humiliation, self-loathing, and self-denial. 2. There is a rational love to Christ, which, without these sensible emotions felt in the former case, evidences itself by a dutiful regard to the divine authority and command. When one bears such a love to Christ, though the vehement strings of affection be wanting, yet he is truly tender of offending a gracious God; endeavours to walk before him unto all well pleasing; and is grieved at the heart for what is displeasing unto him, 1 John v. 3, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." Now, although that sensible love does not always continue with you, you have no reason to deem it a hypocritical fit, while the rational love remains with you; any more than a loving and faithful wife needs question her love to her husband, when her fondness is abated.

Case 5. "The attainments of hypocrites and apostates are a terror to me, and come like a shaking storm on me, when I am about to conclude, from the marks of grace, which I seem to find in myself, that I am in the state of grace." *Answer.* These things should indeed stir us up to a most serious and impartial examination of ourselves; but ought not to keep us in a continued suspense as to our state. Sirs, you see the outside of hypocrites, their duties, their gifts, their tears, and so on, but you see not their inside; you do not discern their hearts, the bias of their spirits. Upon what you see of them, you found a judgment of charity as to their state; and you do well to judge charitably in such a case, because you cannot know the secret springs of their actions: but you are seeking, and ought to have, a judgment of certainty as to your own state; and therefore are to look into that part of religion; which none in the world but yourselves can discern in you; and which you can as little see in others. A hypocrite's region may appear far greater than that of a sincere soul: but that which makes the greatest figure in the eyes of men, is often of least worth before God. I would rather utter one of those groans which the apostle speaks of, Rom. viii. 26, than shed Esau's tears, have Balaam's prophetic spirit, or the joy of the stony-ground hearer. "The fire that shall try every man's work," will try, not of what

bulk it is, but "of what sort it is," 1 Cor. iii. 13.—Though you may know what bulk of religion another has, and that it be more bulky than your own, yet God doth not regard that; why then do you make such a matter of it? It is impossible for you, without divine revelation, certainly to know of what sort another man's religion is: but you may certainly know what sort your own is of, without extraordinary revelation; otherwise the apostle would not exhort the saints to "give diligence to make their calling and election sure," 2 Peter i. 10. Therefore the attainments of hypocrites and apostates should not dsturb you, in your serious inquiry into your own state. I will tell you two things, wherein the meanest saints go beyond the most refined hypocrites: 1. In denying themselves; renouncing all confidence in themselves, and their own works; acquiescing in, being well pleased with, and venturing their souls upon, God's plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, Matt. v. 3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." And chap. xi. 6, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." Phil. iii. 3, "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh." 2. In a real hatred of all sin; being willing to part with every lust, without exception, and to comply with every duty which the Lord makes, or shall make known to them, Psalm cxix. 6, "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Try yourselves by these.

Case 6. "I see myself fall so far short of the saints mentioned in the Scriptures, and of several excellent persons of my own acquaintance, that, when I look on them, I can hardly look on myself as one of the same family with them." *Answer.* It is indeed matter of humiliation, that we do not get forward to that measure of grace and holiness which we see is attainable in this life. This should make us more vigorously press towards the mark: but surely it is from the devil, that weak Christians make a rack for themselves, of the attainments of the strong. To yield to the temptation, is as unreasonable as for a child to dispute away his relation to his father, because he is not of the same stature with his elder brethren. There are saints of several sizes in Christ's family; some fathers, some young men, and some little children, 1 John ii. 13, 14.

Case 7. "I never read in the word of God, nor did I ever know of a child of God, so tempted, and so left of God, as I am; and therefore, no saint's case being like mine, I cannot but conclude that I am none of their number. *Answer.* This objection arises to some from their ignorance of the Scriptures, and the experience of Christians. It is profitable, in this case, to impart the matter to

some experienced Christian friend, or to some godly minister. This has been a blessed means of peace to some persons; while their case, which appeared to them to be singular, has been proved to have been the case of other saints. The Scriptures give instances of very horrid temptations, wherewith the saints have been assaulted. Job was tempted to blaspheme; this was the great thing the devil aimed at in the case of that great saint, Job. i. 11, "He will curse thee to thy face." Chap. ii. 9, "Curse God and die." Asaph was tempted to think it was in vain to be religious, which was in effect to throw off all religion, Psalm lxxiii. 13, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain." Yea, Christ himself was tempted to "cast himself down from a pinnacle of the temple," and to "worship the devil," Matt. iv. 6—9. And many of the children of God have not only been attacked with, but have actually yielded to very gross temptation for a time. Peter denied Christ, and cursed and swore that he knew him not, Mark xiv. 71. Paul, when a persecutor compelled even saints to blaspheme, Acts xxvi. 10, 11. Many of the saints can, from their sad experience, bear witness to very gross temptations, which have astonished their spirits, made their very flesh to tremble, and sickened their bodies. Satan's fiery darts make terrible work; and will cost some pains to quench them, by a vigorous managing of the shield of faith, Eph. vi. 16. Sometimes he makes such desparate attacks, that never was one more put to it, in running to and fro, without intermission, to quench the fire-balls incessantly thrown into his house by an enemy, designing to burn the house about him, than the poor tempted saint is, to repel Satanical injections. But these injections, these horrid temptations though they are a dreadful affliction, they are not the sins of the tempted, unless they make them heirs by consenting to them. They will be charged upon the tempter alone, if they be not consented to; and will no more be laid to the charge of the tempted party, than a bastard's being laid down at a chaste man's door will fix guilt upon him.

But suppose neither minister nor private Christian, to whom you go, can tell you of any who has been in your case; yet you ought not thence to infer that your case is singular, far less to give up hope: for it is not to be thought, that every godly minister, or private Christian, has had experience of all the cases which a child of God may be in. We need not doubt that some have had distresses known only to God and their own consciences; and so to others these distresses are as if they had never been. Yea, and though the Scriptures contain suitable directions for every case which a child of God can be in, and these illustrated with a sufficient number of examples; yet it is not to be imagined that there are in the

Scriptures perfect instances of every particular case incident to the saints. Therefore, though you cannot find an instance of your case in the Scripture, yet bring your case to it, and you shall find suitable remedies prescribed there for it. Study rather to make use of Christ for your case, who has a remedy for all diseases, than to know if ever any was in your case. Though one should shew you an instance of your case, in an undoubted saint; yet none could promise that it would certainly give you ease: for a scrupulous conscience would readily find out some difference. And if nothing but a perfect conformity of another's case to yours will satisfy it will be hard, if not impossible, to satisfy you; for it is with people's cases, as with their natural faces: though the faces of all men are of one make, and some are so very like others, that, at first view, we are ready to take them for the same; yet if you view them more accurately, you will see something in every face, distinguishing it from all others; though possibly you cannot tell what it is. Wherefore I conclude, that if you can find in yourselves the marks of regeneration, proposed to you from the word, you ought to conclude you are in the state of grace, though your case were singular, which is indeed unlikely.

Case 8. "The afflictions I meet with are strange and unusual. I doubt if ever a child of God was tried with such dispensations of providence as I am." *Answer.* Much of what was said on the preceding case, may be helpful in this. Holy Job was assaulted with this temptation, Job v. 1, "To which of the saints wilt thou turn?" But he rejected it, and held fast his integrity. The apostle supposes that Christians may be tempted to "think it strange concerning the fiery trial," 1 Pet. iv. 12. But they have need of larger experience than Solomon's, who will venture to say, "See this is new," Eccl. i. 10. What though, in respect of the outward dispensations of providence, "it happen to you according to the work of the wicked?" yet you may be just notwithstanding; according to Solomon's observation, Eccl. viii. 14. Sometimes we travel in ways where we can neither perceive the prints of the foot of man or beast; yet we cannot from thence conclude that there was never any there before us: so though thou canst not perceive the footsteps of the flock, in the way of thine affliction, thou must not therefore conclude that thou art the first that ever travelled that road. But what if it were so? Some one saint or other must be first, in drinking of each bitter cup the rest have drunk of. What warrant have you or I to limit the Holy One of Israel to a trodden path, in his dispensations towards us? "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters; and thy footsteps are not known," Psalm lxxvii. 19. If the Lord should

carry you to heaven by some retired road, so to speak, you would have no ground of complaint. Learn to allow sovereignty a latitude; be at your duty; and let no affliction cast a veil over any evidences you otherwise have for your being in the state of grace: for "no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him," Eccl. ix. 1.

Use II. You that are strangers to this new birth, be convinced of the absolute necessity of it. Are all who are in the state of grace born again? then you have neither part nor lot in it, who are not born again. I must tell you in the words of our Lord and Saviour, and O that he would speak them to your hearts! "You *must* be born again," John iii. 7. For your conviction, consider these few things.

1. Regeneration is absolutely necessary to qualify you to do any thing really good and acceptable to God. While you are not born again, your best works are but glittering sins; for though the matter of them is good, they are quite marred in the performance. Consider, 1. That without regeneration there is no faith, and "without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. 6. Faith is a vital act of the new-born soul. The evangelist, shewing the different entertainment which our Lord Jesus had from different persons, some receiving him, some rejecting him, points at regenerating grace as the true cause of that difference, without which never any one would have received him. He tells us, that "as many as received him," were those "which were born—of God," John i. 11—13. Unregenerate men may presume; but true faith they cannot have. Faith is a flower that grows not in the field of nature. As the tree cannot grow without a root, neither can a man believe without the new nature, whereof the principle of believing is a part. 2. Without regeneration a man's works are dead works. As is the principle, so must the effects be: if the lungs are rotten, the breath will be unsavoury; and he who at best is dead in sin, his works at best will be but dead works. "Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure—being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate," Tit. i. 15, 16. Could we say of a man, that he is more blameless in his life than any other in the world; that he reduces his body with fasting; and has made his knees as horns with continual praying; but he is not born again: that exception would mar all. As if one should say, There is a well proportioned body, but the soul is gone; it is but a dead lump. This is a melting consideration. Thou dost many things materially good; but God says, All these things avail not, as long as I see the old nature reigning in the man. Gal. vi. 15, "For in Jesus Christ

neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

If thou art not born again, (1.) All thy reformation is naught in the sight of God. Thou hast shut the door, but the thief is still in the house. It may be thou art not what once thou wast; yet thou art not what thou must be, if ever thou see heaven; for "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3. (2.) Thy prayers are an "abomination to the Lord," Prov. xv. 8. It may be, others admire thy seriousness; thou criest as for thy life; but God accounts of the opening of thy mouth, as one would account of the opening of a grave full of rottenness, Rom. iii. 13, "Their throat is an open sepulchre." Others are affected with thy prayers; which seem to them, as if they would rend the heavens; but God accounts them but as the howling of a dog: "They have not cried unto me with their hearts, when they howled upon their beds," Hos. vii. 14. Others take thee for a wrestler and prevailer with God; but he can take no delight in thee nor thy prayers, Isa. lxvi. 3, "He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck;—he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol." Why, because thou art yet "in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity!" (3.) All thou hast done for God, and his cause in the world, though it may be followed with temporal rewards, yet it is lost as to divine acceptance. This is clear from the case of Jehu, who was indeed rewarded with a kingdom, for his executing due vengeance upon the house of Ahab; as being a work good for the matter of it, because it was commanded of God, as you may see, 2 Kings ix. 7; yet was he punished for it in his posterity, because he did it not in a right manner, Hos. i. 4, "I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu." God looks chiefly to the heart: and if so, truly, though the outward appearance be fairer than that of many others, yet the hidden man of thy heart is loathsome; you look well before men, but are not, as Moses was, fair to God, as the margin has it, Acts vii. 20. O what a difference is there between the characters of Asa and Amaziah! "The high places were not removed; nevertheless, Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days," 1 Kings xv. 14. "Amaziah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart," 2 Chron. xxv. 2. It may be thou art zealous against sin in others, and dost admonish them of their duty, and reprove them for their sin; and they hate thee, because thou dost thy duty; but I must tell thee, God hates thee too, because thou dost it not in a right manner; and that thou canst never do, whilst thou art not born again. (4.) All thy strug-

gles against sin in thine own heart and life, are naught. The proud Pharisee afflicted his body with fasting, and God struck his soul, in the mean time, with a sentence of condemnation, Luke xviii. Balaam struggled with his covetous temper, to that degree, that though he loved the wages of unrighteousness, yet he would not win them by cursing Israel: but he died the death of the wicked, Numb. xxxi. 8. All thou dost, while in an unregenerate state, is for thyself: therefore it will fare with thee as with a subject, who having reduced the rebels, puts the crown on his own head, and loses all his good service and his head too.

Objection. "If it be thus with us, then we need never perform any religious duty at all." *Answer.* The conclusion is not just. No inability of thine can excuse from the duty which God's law lays on thee: and there is less evil in doing thy duty, than there is in the omission of it. But there is a difference between omitting a duty, and doing it as thou dost it. A man orders the masons to build him a house. If they quite neglect the work, that will not be accepted; if they build on the old rotten foundation, neither will that please: but they must raze the foundation, and build on firm ground. "Go thou and do likewise." In the mean time, it is not in vain even for thee to seek the Lord: for though he regards thee not, yet he may have respect to his own ordinances, and do thee good thereby, as was said before.

2. Without regeneration there is no communion with God. There is a society on earth, whose "fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John i. 3. But out of that society, all the unregenerate are excluded; for they are all enemies to God, as you heard before at large. Now, "can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos iii. 3. They are all unholy: and "what communion hath light with darkness—Christ with Belial?" 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. They may have a shew and semblance of holiness; but they are strangers to true holiness, and therefore "without God in the world." How sad is it, to be employed in religious duties, yet to have no fellowship with God in them! You would not be content with your meat, unless it nourished you; nor with your clothes, unless they kept you warm: and how can you satisfy yourselves with your duties, while you have no communion with God in them?

3. Regeneration is absolutely necessary to qualify you for heaven. None go to heaven but those who are made meet for it, Col. i. 12. As it was with Solomon's temple, 1 Kings vi. 7, so is it with the temple above. It is "built of stone made ready before it is brought thither;" namely, of "lively stones," 1 Pet. ii. 5,—"wrought for the selfsame thing," 2 Cor. v. 5; for they cannot be

laid in that glorious building just as they come out of the quarry of depraved nature. Jewels of gold are not meet for swine, and far less jewels of glory for unrenewed sinners. Beggars, in their rags, are not fit for kings' houses; nor sinners to enter into the King's palace, without the raiment of needlework, Psalm xlv. 14, 15. What wise man would bring fish out of the water to feed in his meadows? or send his oxen to feed in the sea? Even as little are the unregenerate fit for heaven, or heaven fit for them. It would never be relished by them.

The unregenerate would find fault with heaven on several accounts. As, (1.) That it is a strange country. Heaven is the renewed man's native country: his Father is in heaven; his mother is Jerusalem, which is above, Gal. iv. 26. He is born from above, John iii. 3. Heaven is his home, 2 Cor. v. 1; therefore he looks on himself as a stranger on this earth, and his heart is homeward, Heb. xi. 16, "They desire a better country, that is, a heavenly country." But the unregenerate man is the man of the earth, Psalm x. 18; written in the earth, Jer. xvii. 13. Now, "Home is home, be it ever so homely:" therefore he minds earthly things, Phil. iii. 19. There is a peculiar sweetness in our native soil; and with difficulty are men drawn to leave it, and dwell in a strange country. In no case does that prevail more than in this; for unrenewed men would quit their pretensions to heaven, were it not that they see they cannot make a better bargain. (2.) There is nothing in heaven that they delight in, as agreeable to the carnal heart, Rev. xxi. 27, "For there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth." When Mahomet gave out a paradise to be a place of sensual delights, his religion was greedily embraced; for that is the heaven men naturally choose. If the covetous man could get bags full of gold there, and the voluptuous man could promise himself his sensual delights they might be reconciled to heaven, and meetened for it too; but since it is not so, though they may utter fair words about it, truly it has little of their hearts. (3.) Every corner there is filled with that which of all things they have the least liking for; and that is holiness, true holiness, perfect holiness. Were one that abhors swine's flesh, bidden to a feast where all the dishes were of that sort of meat, but variously prepared, he would find fault with every dish at the table, notwithstanding all the art used to make them palatable. It is true, there is joy in heaven, but it is holy joy; there are pleasures in heaven, but they are holy pleasures; there are places in heaven, but it is holy ground,—that holiness which in every place, and in every thing there, would mar all to the unregenerate. (4.) Were they carried thither, they would not only change

their place, which would be a great heart-break, but they would change their company too. Truly, they would never like the company there, who care not for communion with God here; nor value the fellowship of his people, at least in the vitals of practical godliness. Many, indeed, mix themselves with the godly on earth, to procure a name to themselves, and to cover the sinfulness of their hearts; but that trade cannot be managed there. (5.) They would never like the employment of heaven, they care so little for it now. The business of the saints there would be an intolerable burden to them, seeing it is not agreeable to their nature. To be taken up in beholding, admiring, and praising him that sits on the throne, and the Lamb, would be work unsuitable, and therefore unsavoury to an unrenewed soul. (6.) They would find this fault with it, that the whole is of everlasting continuance. This would be a killing ingredient in it to them. How would such as now account the Sabbath day a burden, brook the celebration of an everlasting Sabbath in the heavens!

4. Regeneration is absolutely necessary to your being admitted into heaven, John iii. 3. No heaven without it. Though carnal men could digest all those things which make heaven so unsuitable for them, yet God will never bring them thither. Therefore born again you must be, else you shall never see heaven; you shall perish eternally. For, (1.) There is a bill of exclusion against you in the court of heaven, and against all of your sort; "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. 3. Here is a bar before you, that men and angels cannot remove. To hope for heaven, in the face of this peremptory sentence, is to hope that God will recall his word, and sacrifice his truth and faithfulness to your safety; which is infinitely more than to hope that "the earth shall be forsaken for you, and the rock removed out of its place." (2.) There is no holiness without regeneration. It is "the new man which is created in true holiness," Eph. iv. 24. And no heaven without holiness; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. Will the gates of pearl be opened, to let in dogs and and swine? No; their place is without, Rev. xxii. 15. God will not admit such into the holy place of communion with him here; and will he admit them into the holiest of all hereafter? Will he take the children of the devil, and permit them to sit with him in his throne? Or, will he bring the unclean into the city, whose street is pure gold? Be not deceived; grace and glory are but two links of one chain, which God has joined, and no man shall put asunder. None are transplanted into the paradise above, but out of the nursery of grace below. If you be unholy while in this world, you

will be for ever miserable in the world to come. (3.) All the unregenerate are without Christ, and therefore have no hope while in that case, Eph. ii. 12. Will Christ prepare mansions of glory for those who refuse to receive him into their hearts? Nay, rather will he not "laugh at their calamity," who now "set at nought all his counsel?" Prov. i. 25, 26. (4.) There is an infallible connexion between a finally unregenerate state and damnation, arising from the nature of the things themselves; and from the decree of heaven which is fixed and immovable, as mountains of brass, John iii. 3; Rom. viii. 6. "To be carnally minded is death." An unregenerate state is hell in the bud. It is eternal destruction in embryo, growing daily, though thou dost not discern it. Death is painted on many a fair face, in this life. Depraved nature makes men meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the damned, in utter darkness. 1. The heart of stone within thee, is a sinking weight. As a stone naturally goes downward, so the hard stony heart tends downward to the bottomless pit. You are hardened against reproof; though you are told your danger, yet you will not see it, you will not believe it. But remember that the conscience being now seared with a hot iron, is a sad presage of everlasting burnings. 2. Your unfruitfulness under the means of grace, fits you for the axe of God's judgments, Matt. iii. 10, "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire." The withered branch is fuel for the fire, John xv. 6. Tremble at this, you despisers of the Gospel: if you be not thereby made meet for heaven, you will be like the barren ground, bearing briers and thorns, "nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned," Heb. vi. 8. 3. The hellish dispositions of mind, which discover themselves in profanity of life, fit the guilty for the regions of horror. A profane life will have a miserable end. "They which do such things, shall not inherit the kingdom of God," Gal. v. 19—21. Think on this, you prayerless persons, ye mockers of religion, ye cursers and swearers, ye unclean and unjust persons, who have not so much as moral honesty to keep you from lying, cheating, and stealing. What sort of a tree do you think it is, upon which these fruits grow? Is it a tree of righteousness, which the Lord hath planted? Or is it not such a one as cumbers the ground, which God will pluck up for fuel to the fire of his wrath? 4. Your being dead in sin, makes you meet to be wrapped in flames of brimstone, as a winding-sheet; and to be buried in the bottomless pit, as in a grave. Great was the cry in Egypt, when the first-born in each family was dead; but are there not many families, where all are dead together? Nay, many there are who are twice dead, plucked up by the root. Sometimes in their life they

have been roused by apprehensions of death, and its consequences; but now they are so far on in their way to the land of darkness, that they hardly ever have the least glimmering of light from heaven. 5. The darkness of your minds presages eternal darkness. O the horrid ignorance with which some are plagued; while others, who have got some rays of the light of reason in their heads, are utterly void of spiritual light in their hearts! If you knew your case, you would cry out, Oh! darkness! darkness! darkness! makmaking way for the blackness of darkness for ever! The face-covering is upon you already, as condemned persons; so near are you to everlasting darkness. It is only Jesus Christ who can stop the execution, pull the napkin off the face of the condemned malefactor, and put a pardon in his hand, Isa. xxv. 7. "He will destroy, in this mountain, the face of covering cast over all people," that is, the face-covering cast over the condemned, as in Haman's case, Esth. vii. 8. "As the word went out of the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face." 6. The chains of darkness you are bound with in the prison of your depraved state, Isa. lxi. 1, fits you to be cast into the burning fiery furnace. Ah, miserable men! Sometimes their consciences stir within them, and they begin to think of amending their ways. But alas! they are in chains, they cannot do it. They are chained by the heart: their lusts cleave so fast to them, that they cannot, nay, they will not shake them off. Thus you see what affinity there is between an unregenerate state, and the state of the damned, the state of absolute and irretrievable misery. Be convinced, then, that you must be born again; put a high value on the new birth, and eagerly desire it.

The text tells you, that the word is the seed, whereof the new creature is formed: therefore take heed to it, and entertain it, as it is your life. Apply yourself to the reading of the Scriptures. You that cannot read, get others to read it to you. Wait diligently on the preaching of the word, as by divine appointment the special mean of conversion; "for—it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 21. Wherefore cast not yourselves out of Christ's way; reject not the means of grace, lest you be found to judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life. Attend carefully to the word preached. Hear every sermon, as if you were hearing for eternity; take heed that the fowls of the air pick not up this seed from you, as it is sown. "Give thyself wholly to it," 1 Tim. iv. 15. "Receive it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God," 1 Thess. ii. 13. Hear it with application, looking on it as a message sent from heaven, to you in particular; though not to you only, Rev. iii. 22. "He that

hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Lay it up in your hearts; meditate upon it; and be not as the unclean beasts, that chew not the cud. But by earnest prayer, beg that the dew of Heaven may fall on thy heart, that the seed may spring up there.

More particularly, 1 Receive the testimony of the word of God, concerning the misery of an unregenerate state, the sinfulness thereof, and the absolute necessity of regeneration. 2. Receive its testimony concerning God, what a holy and just One he is. 3. Examine thy ways by it; namely, the thoughts of thy heart, the expressions of thy lips, and the tenour of thy life. Look back through the several periods of thy life; and see thy sins from the precepts of the word, and learn, from its threatening, what thou art liable to on account of these sins. 4. By the help of the same word of God, view the corruption of thy nature, as in a glass which manifests our ugly face in a clear manner. Were these things deeply rooted in the heart, they might be the seed of that fear and sorrow, on account of thy soul's state, which are necessary to prepare and stir thee up to look after a Saviour. Fix your thoughts upon him offered to thee in the Gospel, as fully suited to thy case; having, by his obedience unto death, perfectly satisfied the justice of God, and brought in everlasting righteousness. This may prove the seed of humiliation, desire, hope and faith; and move thee to stretch out the withered hand unto him, at his own command.

Let these things sink deeply into your hearts, and improve them diligently. Remember, whatever you are, you *must* be born again; else it had been better for you, that you had never been born. Wherefore, if any of you shall live and die in an unregenerate state, you will be inexcusable, having been fairly warned of your danger.

PART II.

MYSTICAL UNION BETWEEN CHRIST AND BELIEVERS.

I am the vine ye are the branches.—JOHN XV. 5.

Having spoken of the change made by regeneration, on all those who will inherit eternal life, in opposition to their natural real state, the state of degeneracy; I proceed to speak of the change made on them, in their union with the Lord Jesus Christ, in opposition to their natural relative state, the state of misery. The doctrine of

the saints' union with Christ, is very plainly and fully insisted on, from the beginning to the eighth verse of this chapter; which is a part of our Lord's farewell sermon to his disciples. Sorrow had now filled their hearts; they were apt to say, Alas! what will become of us, when our Master is taken from our head? Who will then instruct us? Who will solve our doubts? How shall we be supported under our difficulties and discouragements? How shall we be able to live without our wonted communication with him? Therefore our Lord Jesus Christ seasonably teaches them the mystery of their union with him, comparing himself to the vine, and them to the branches.

He compares, 1. Himself to a vine. "I am the vine." He had been celebrating, with his disciples, the sacrament of his supper, that sign and seal of his people's union with him; and had told them, "That he would drink no more of the fruit of the vine, till he should drink it new with them in his Father's kingdom:" and now he shews himself to be the vine, from whence the wine of their consolation should come. The vine has less beauty than many other trees, but it is exceedingly fruitful; fitly representing the low condition in which our Lord was in, bringing many sons to glory. But that which is chiefly aimed at, in his comparing himself to a vine, is to represent himself as the supporter and nourisher of his people, in whom they live and bring forth fruit. 2. He compares them to branches; ye are the branches of that vine. Ye are the branches knit to, and growing on this stock, drawing all your life and sap from it. It is a beautiful comparison; as if he had said, I am as a vine, you are as the branches of that vine. Now there are two sorts of branches: 1. Natural branches, which at first spring out of the stock. These are the branches that are in the tree, and were never out of it. 2. There are ingrafted branches, which are branches cut off from the tree that first gave them life, and put into another, to grow upon it. Thus branches come to be on a tree, which originally were not on it. The branches mentioned in the text, are of the latter sort; branches broken off, as the word in the original language denotes, namely, from the tree that first gave them life. None of the children of men are natural branches of the second Adam, that is, Jesus Christ, the true vine; they are the natural branches of the first Adam, that degenerate vine: but the elect are all of them, sooner or later, broken off from their natural stock, and ingrafted into Christ, the true vine.

Doctrine. They who are in the state of grace, are ingrafted in, and united to, the Lord Jesus Christ. They are taken out of their natural stock, cut off from it; and are now ingrafted into Christ, as the new stock.

In general, for understanding the union between the Lord Jesus Christ and his elect, who believe in him, and on him, I observe,

1. It is a spiritual union. Man and wife, by their marriage-union, become one flesh; Christ and true believers, by this union, become one spirit, 1 Cor. vi. 17. As one soul or spirit actuates both the head and the members in the natural body, so the one Spirit of God dwells in Christ and the Christian; for, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his his," Rom. viii. 9. Earthly union is made by contact; so the stones in a building are united; but this is a union of another nature. Were it possible that we could eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, in a corporeal and carnal manner, it would profit nothing, John vi. 63. It was not Mary's bearing him in her womb, but her believing on him, that made her a saint, Luke xi. 27, 28, "A certain woman—said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

2. It is a real union. Such is our weakness in our present state, so much are we sunk in sin, that in our fancy, we are prone to form an image of every thing proposed to us: and as to whatever is denied us, we are apt to suspect it to be only a fiction. But nothing is more real than what is spiritual: as approaching nearest to the nature of him who is the fountain of all reality, namely, God himself. We do not see with our eyes the union between our own soul and body; neither can we represent it to ourselves truly, by imagination, as we do sensible things: yet the reality of it is not to be doubted. Faith is no fancy, but "the substance of things hoped for," Heb. xi. 1. Neither is the union thereby made between Christ and believers imaginary, but most real: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30.

2. It is a most close and intimate union. Believers, regenerate persons, who believe in him, and rely on him, have put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27. If that be not enough, he is in them, John xvii. 23, formed in them as the child in the womb, Gal. iv. 19. He is the foundation, 1 Cor. iii. 11; they are the lively stones built upon him, 1 Pet. ii. 5. He is the head and they the body, Eph. i. 22, 23. Nay, he liveth in them, as their very souls live in their bodies, Gal. ii. 20. And what is more than all this, they are one in the Father and the Son, as the Father is in Christ, and Christ in the Father, John xvii. 21, "That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

4. Though it is not a mere legal union, yet it is a union supported by law. Christ, as the surety, and Christians as the princi-

pal debtors, are one in the eye of the law. When the elect had run themselves, with the rest of mankind, in debt to the justice of God, Christ became surety for them, and paid the debt. When they believe on him, they are united to him in a spiritual marriage union; which takes effect so far, that what he did and suffered for them is reckoned in law, as if they had done and suffered it themselves. Hence, they are said to be crucified with Christ, Gal. ii. 20; buried with him, Col. ii. 12; yea, raised up together, namely, with Christ, "and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus," Eph. ii. 6. In which places, saints on earth, of whom the apostle there speaks, cannot be said to be sitting, but in the way of law reckoning.

5. It is an indissolute union. Once in Christ, ever in him. Having taken up his habitation in the heart, he never removes. None can untie this happy knot.—Who will dissolve this union? Will he himself? No, he will not; we have his word for it; "I will not turn away from them," Jer. xxxii. 40. But perhaps the sinner will do this mischief to himself? No, he shall not; "they shall not depart from me," saith their God. Can devils do it? No, unless they be stronger than Christ and his Father too; "Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand," saith our Lord, John x. 28. "And none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand," verse 30. But what say you of death, which parts husband and wife; yea, separates the soul from the body? Will not death do it? No: the apostle, Rom. viii. 38, 39, is "persuaded that neither death," terrible as it is, "nor life," desirable as it is; "nor" devils, those evil "angels, nor" the devil's persecuting agents, though they be "principalities, nor powers" on earth; "nor" evil "things present," already lying on us; "nor" evil "things to come" on us; "nor" the "height" of worldly felicity; "nor depth" of worldly misery; "nor any other creature," good or evil, "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is Christ Jesus our Lord." As death separated Christ's soul from his body, but could not separate either his soul or body from his divine nature; so, though the saints should be separated from their nearest relations in the world, and from all their earthly enjoyments; yea, though their souls should be separated from their bodies separated in a thousand pieces, their "bones scattered, as one cutteth or cleaveth wood;" yet soul and body shall remain united to the Lord Christ; for even in death, "they sleep in Jesus," 1 Thess. iv. 14; and "he keepeth all their bones," Psalm xxxiv. 20. Union with Christ, is "the grace wherein we stand," firm and stable, "as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed."

6. It is a mysterious union. The gospel is a doctrine of mysteries. It discovers to us the substantial union of the three persons in one Godhead, 1 John v. 7, "These three are one;" the hypostatical union, of the divine and human natures, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Tim. iii. 16, "God was manifest in the flesh;" and the mystical union, between Christ and believers; "This is a great mystery" also, Eph. v. 32. O what mysteries are here! The head in heaven, the members on earth, yet really united! "Christ in the believer, living in him, walking in him:" and "the believer dwelling in God, putting on the Lord Jesus, eating his flesh, and drinking his blood!" This makes the saints a mystery to the world; yea, a mystery to themselves.

I come now more particularly to speak of this union with, and ingrafting into, Jesus Christ.

I. I shall consider the natural stock, which the branches are taken out of.

II. The supernatural stock they are ingrafted into.

III. What branches are cut off the old stock, and put into the new.

IV. How it is done. And,

V. The benefits flowing from this union and ingrafting.

I. Let us take a view of the stock, which the branches are taken out of. The two Adams, that is, Adam and Christ, are the two stocks: for the Scripture speaks of these two, as if there had been no more men in the world than they, 1 Cor. xv. 45, "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit;" verse 47, "The first man is of the earth earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." And the reason is, there never were any that were not branches of one of these two; all men being either in the one stock or in the other: for in these two sorts all mankind stand divided, verse 48, "As is the earthy, such are they also which are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." The first Adam then, is the natural stock: on this stock are the branches found growing at first, which are afterwards cut off, and ingrafted into Christ. As for the fallen angels, as they had no relation to the first Adam, so they have none to the second.

There are four things to be remembered here. (1.) That all mankind, the man Christ excepted, are naturally branches of the first Adam, Rom. v. 12, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men." (2.) The bond which knit us unto the natural stock, was the covenant of works. Adam, being our natural root, was made the moral root also, bear-

ing all his posterity, as representing them in the covenant of works. For "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," Rom. v. 19. It was necessary that there should be a peculiar relation between that one man and the many, as a foundation for imputing his sin to them. This relation did not arise from the mere natural bond between him and us, as a father to his children; for so we are related to our immediate parents, whose sins are not thereupon imputed to us, as Adam's sin is, but it arose from a moral bond between Adam and us: the bond of a covenant, which could be no other than the covenant of works, wherein we are united to him, as branches to a stock. Hence Jesus Christ, though a son of Adam, Luke iii. 23—38, was none of these branches; for as he came not of Adam, in virtue of the blessing of marriage, which was given before the fall, Gen. i. 28, "Be fruitful, and multiply," &c. but in virtue of a special promise made after the fall, Gen. iii. 15, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," he could not be represented by Adam in a covenant made before his fall. (3.) As it is impossible for a branch to be in two stocks at once, so no man can be at one and the same time, both in the first and second Adam. (4.) Hence it evidently follows, that all who are not ingrafted in Jesus Christ, are yet branches of the old stock; and so partake of the nature of the same. Now, as to the first Adam, our natural stock, consider,

First, What a stock he was originally. He was a vine of the Lord's planting, a choice vine, a noble vine, wholly good. There was a consultation of the Trinity at the planting of this vine, Gen. i. 26, "Let us make man in our image, after our own likeness." There was no rottenness at the heart of it. There was sap and juice enough in it to have nourished all the branches, to bring forth fruit unto God. My meaning is, Adam was made able perfectly to keep the commandments of God, which would have procured eternal life to himself, and to all his posterity; for as all die by Adam's disobedience, all would have had life by his obedience, if he had stood. Consider,

Secondly, What that stock now is. Ah! most unlike to what it was when planted by the Author of all good. A blast from hell, and a bite with the venomous teeth of the old serpent, have made it a degenerate stock; a dead stock; nay, a killing stock.

1. It is a degenerate evil stock. Therefore the Lord God said to Adam in that dismal day, "Where art thou?" Gen. iii. 9. In what condition art thou now? "How art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me!" Or, "Where wast thou?" Why not in the place of meeting with me? Why so long

in coming? What means this fearful change; this hiding of thyself from me? Alas! the stock is degenerate, quite spoiled, is become altogether naught, and brings forth wild grapes. Converse with the devil is preferred to communion with God. Satan is believed; and God, who is truth itself, disbelieved. He who was the friend of God is now in conspiracy against him. Darkness is come in the place of light; ignorance prevails in the mind, where divine knowledge shone; the will, which was righteous and regular, is now turned rebel against its Lord: and the whole man is in dreadful disorder.

Before I go farther, let me stop and observe, Here is a mirror both for saints and sinners. Sinners, stand here and consider what you are; and saints, learn what you once were. You, sinners, are branches of a degenerate stock. Fruit you may bear indeed; but now that your vine is the vine of Sodom, your grapes must of course be grapes of gall, Deut. xxxii. 32. The Scripture speaks of two sorts of fruit which grow on the branches of the natural stock; and it is plain that they are of the nature of their degenerate stock. (1.) The wild grapes of wickedness, Isa. v. 2. These grow in abundance, by influence from hell. See Gal. v. 19—21. At its gates are all manner of these fruits, both new and old. Storms come from heaven to check them; but still they grow. They are struck at with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God; conscience gives them many a secret blow; yet they thrive. (2.) Fruit to themselves, Hos. x. 1. What else are all the unrenewed man's acts of obedience, his reformation, sober deportment, his prayers, and good works? They are all done chiefly for himself, not for the glory of God. These fruits are like the apples of Sodom, fair to look at, but full of ashes when handled and tried. You think you have not only the leaves of a profession, but the fruits of a holy practice too; but if you be not broken off from the old stock, and ingrafted in Christ Jesus, God accepts not, and regards not your fruits.

Here I must take occasion to tell you, there are five faults will be found in heaven with your best fruits.—1. Their bitterness; your "clusters are bitter," Deut. xxxii. 32. There is a spirit of bitterness, wherewith some come before the Lord, in religious duties, living in malice and envy; and which some professors entertain against others, because they outshine them in holiness of life, or because they are not of their opinion. This, wherever it reigns, is a fearful symptom of an unregenerate state. But I do not so much mean this, as that which is common to all the branches of the old stock, namely, the leaves of hypocrisy, Luke xii. 1, which sours and

imbitters every duty they perform. Wisdom, that is full of good fruits, is without hypocrisy, James iii. 17. 2. Their ill savour. Their works are abominable, for they themselves are corrupt, Psalm xiv. 1. They all savour of the old stock, not of the new. It is the peculiar privilege of the saints, that they are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, 2 Cor. ii. 15. The unregenerate man's fruits savour not of love to Christ, nor of the blood of Christ, nor of the incense of his intercession, and therefore will never be accepted in heaven. 3. Their unripeness. Their grape is an unripe grape, Job xv. 33. There is no influence on them from the Sun of righteousness to bring them to perfection. They have the shape of fruit, but no more. The matter of duty is in them, but they want right principles and ends: their works are not in God, John iii. 21. Their prayers drop from their lips, before their hearts are impregnated with the vital sap of the Spirit of supplication: their tears fall from their eyes before their hearts are truly softened; their feet turn to new paths, and their way is altered, while their nature still is unchanged. 4. Their lightness. Being weighed in the balances, they are found wanting, Dan. v. 27. For evidence whereof you may observe that they do not humble the soul, but lift it up in pride. The good fruits of holiness bear down the branches they grow upon, making them to salute the ground, 1 Cor. xv. 19, "I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." But the blasted fruits of unrenewed men's performances, hang lightly on branches towering up to heaven, Judges xvii. 13, "Now know I, that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." They look indeed too high for God to behold them: "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not?" Isa. lviii. 3. The more duties they do, and the better they seem to perform them, the less are they humbled, and the more are they lifted up. This disposition of the sinner is the exact reverse of what is to be found in the saint. To men, who neither are in Christ, nor are solicitous to be found in him, their duties are like floating bladders, wherewith they think to swim ashore to Immanuel's land; but these must needs break, and they consequently sink; because they take not Christ for the lifter up of their heads, Psalm iii. 3, 5. They are not all manner of pleasant fruits, Cant. vii. 13. Christ, as a king, must be served with variety. Where God makes the heart his garden, he plants it as Solomon did his, with trees of all kinds of fruits Eccl. ii. 5. Accordingly it brings forth the fruit of the Spirit in all goodness, Eph. v. 9. But the ungodly are not so; their obedience is never universal; there is always some one thing or other excep-

ted. In one word, their fruits are fruits of an ill tree, that cannot be accepted in heaven.

2. Our natural stock is a dead stock, according to the threatening, Gen. ii. 17, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Our root is now rottenness, no wonder the blossom goes up as dust. The stroke has gone to the heart, the sap is let out, and the tree is withered. The curse of the first covenant, like a hot thunderbolt from heaven, has lighted on it, and ruined it. It is cursed now as that fig-tree, Matth. xxi. 19, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever." Now it is good for nothing, but to cumber the ground, and furnish fuel for Tophet.

Let me enlarge a little here also. Every unrenewed man is a branch of a dead stock. When thou seest, O sinner, a dead stock of a tree, exhausted of all its sap, having branches on it in the same condition, look on it as a lively representation of thy soul's state. 1. Where the stock is dead, the branches must needs be barren. Alas! the barrenness of many professors plainly discovers on what stock they are growing. It is easy to pretend to faith, but "shew me thy faith without thy works!" if thou canst, James ii. 18. 2. A dead stock can convey no sap to the branches, to make them bring forth fruit. The covenant of works was the bond of our union with the natural stock; but now it is become weak through the flesh; that is, through the degeneracy and depravity of human nature, Rom. viii. 3. It is strong enough to command, and to bind heavy burdens on the shoulders of those who are not in Christ, but it affords no strength to bear them. The sap, that was once in the root, is now gone: the law, like a merciless creditor, apprehends Adam's heirs, saying to each, "Pay what thou owest;" when, alas! his effects are riotously spent. 3. All pains and cost are lost on the tree, whose life is gone. In vain do men labour to get fruit on the branches, when there is no sap in the root. The gardener's pains are lost: ministers lose their labour on the branches of the old stock, while they continue on it. Many sermons are preached to no purpose; because there is no life to give sensation. Sleeping men may be awakened; but the dead cannot be raised without a miracle; even so the dead sinner must remain, if he be not restored to life by a miracle of grace. The influences of heaven are lost on such a tree: in vain doth the rain fall upon it; in vain is it laid open to the winter cold and frosts. The Lord of the vineyard digs about many a dead soul, but it is not bettered. "Bruise the fool in a mortar, his folly will not depart." Though he meets with many crosses, yet he retains his lusts: let him be laid on a sick bed, he will lie there like a sick beast, groaning under his pain, but not

mourning for, nor turning from, his sin. Let death itself stare him in the face, he will presumptuously maintain his hope, as if he would look the grim messenger out of countenance. Sometimes there are common operations of the divine Spirit performed on him: he is sent home with a trembling heart, and with arrows of conviction sticking in his soul: but at length he prevails against these things, and becomes as secure as ever. Summer and winter are alike to the branches on the dead stock. When others about them are budding, blossoming, and bringing forth fruit, there is no change on them: the dead stock has no growing time at all. Perhaps it may be difficult to know, in the winter, what trees are dead, and what are alive; but the spring plainly discovers it. There are some seasons wherein there is little life to be perceived, even among saints; yet times of reviving come at length. But even when "the vine flourisheth, and the pomegranates bud forth," when saving grace is discovering itself by its lively actings wherever it is, the branches on the old stock are still withered. When the dry bones are coming together, bone to bone amongst saints, the sinner's bones are still lying about the grave's mouth. They are trees that cumber the ground, ready to be cut down; and will be cut down for the fire, if God in mercy prevent it not by cutting them off from that stock, and ingrafting them into another.

3. Our natural stock is a killing stock. If the stock die, how can the branches live? If the sap be gone from the root and heart, the branches must needs wither. "In Adam all die," 1 Cor. xv. 22. The root died in Paradise, and all the branches in it, and with it. The root is poisoned, and from thence the branches are infected; "death is in the pot;" and all that taste of the pulse, or pottage, are killed.

Know then, that every natural man is a branch of a killing stock. Our natural root not only gives us no life, but it has a killing power, reaching to all the branches thereof. There are four things which the first Adam conveys to all his branches, and they are abiding in, and lying on, such of them as are not ingrafted in Christ. 1. A corrupt nature. He sinned, and his nature was thereby corrupted and depraved; and this corruption is conveyed to all his posterity. He was infected, and the contagion spread itself over all his seed. 2. Guilt, that is, an obligation to punishment, Rom. v. 12, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The threatenings of the law, as cords of death, are twisted about the branches of the old stock, to draw them over the hedge into the fire. And till they be cut off from this stock by

the pruning-knife, the sword of vengeance hangs over their heads, to cut them down. 3. This killing stock transmits the curse into the branches. The stock, as the stock, (for I speak not of Adam in his personal and private capacity,) being cursed, so are the branches, Gal. iii. 10, "For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse." The curse affects the whole man, and all that belongs to him, every thing he possesses; and worketh three ways. 1. As poison, infecting; thus their blessings are cursed, Mal. ii. 2. Whatever the man enjoys, it can do him no good, but evil, being thus poisoned by the curse. His prosperity in the world destroys him, Prov. i. 32. The ministry of the gospel is a savour of death unto death to him, 2 Cor. ii. 16. His seeming attainments in religion are cursed to him; his knowledge serves but to puff him up, and his duties to keep him back from Christ. 2. It worketh as a moth, consuming and wasting by little and little, Hos. v. 12, "Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth." There is a worm at the root, consuming them by degrees. Thus the curse pursued Saul, till it wormed him out of all his enjoyments, and out of the very shew he had of religion. Sometimes they decay like the fat of lambs, and melt away as the show in the sunshine. 3. It acts as a lion rampant, Hos. v. 14, "I will be unto Ephraim as a lion." The Lord "rains on them snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest," in such a manner, that they are hurried away with the stream. He tears their enjoyments from them in his wrath, persues them with terrors, rends their souls from their bodies, and throws the dead branch into the fire. Thus the curse devours like fire, which none can quench. 4. This killing stock transmits death to the branches upon it. Adam took the poisonous cup, and drank it off: this occasioned death to himself and us. We came into the world spiritually dead, thereby exposed to eternal death, and absolutely liable to temporal death. This root is to us like the Scythian river, which, they say, brings forth little bladders every day, out of which come certain small flies, that are bred in the morning, winged at noon, and dead at night: a very lively emblem of our mortal state.

Now, sirs, is it not absolutely necessary to be broken off from this our natural stock? What will our fair leaves of a profession, or our fruits of duties, avail, if we be still branches of the degenerate, dead, and killing stock?—But, alas! of the many questions among us, few are taken up about these, "Whether am I broken off from the old stock, or not? Am I ingrafted in Christ, or not?"—Ah! wherefore all this waste of time? Why is there so much noise about religion among many, who can give no good account of their

having laid a good foundation, being mere strangers to experimental religion? I fear, if God does not in mercy undermine the religion of many of us, and let us see that we have none at all, our root will be found rottenness, and our blossom go up as dust, in a dying hour. Therefore let us look to our state, that we be not found fools in our latter end.

II. Let us now view the supernatural stock, into which the branches cut off from the natural stock are ingrafted. Jesus Christ is sometimes called "The Branch," Zech. iii. 8. So he is in respect of his human nature, being a branch, and the top branch, of the house of David. Sometimes he is called a Root, Isa. xi. 10. We have both together, Rev. xxi. 16, "I am the root and the offspring of David;" David's root as God, and his offspring as man. The text tells us, that he is the vine, that is, he, as a Mediator, is the vine stock, whereof believers are the branches. As the sap comes from the earth into the root and stock, and from thence is diffused into the branches; so, by Christ as Mediator, divine life is conveyed from the fountain, unto those who are united to him by faith, John vi. 57, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so, he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." By Christ as Mediator, not as God only, as some have asserted; nor yet as man only, as the papists generally hold: but as Mediator, God and man, Acts xx. 28, "The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Heb. ix. 14, "Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." The divine and human natures have their distinct actings, yet a joint operation, in his discharging the office of Mediator. This is illustrated by the similitude of a fiery sword, which at once cuts and burns: cutting it burns, and burning it cuts; the steel cuts, and the fire burns. Wherefore Christ, God-man, is the stock, whereof believers are the branches: and they are united to a whole Christ. They are united to him in his human nature, as being "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones," Eph. v. 30. And they are united to him in his divine nature; for so the apostle speaks of this union, Col. i. 27, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."—Those who are Christ's, have the Spirit of Christ, Rom. viii. 9; and by him they are united to the Father, and to the Holy Ghost; 1 John iv. 15, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Faith, the bond of this union, receives a whole Christ, God-man, and so unites us to him as such.

Behold here, O believers, your high privilege. You were once branches of a degenerate stock, even as others: but you are, by grace, become branches of the true vine, John xv. 1. You are cut

out of a dead and killing stock, and ingrafted in the last Adam, who was made a quickening spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 45. Your loss by the first Adam is made up, with great advantage, by your union with the second. Adam, at his best estate, was but a shrub, in comparison with Christ the tree of life. He was but a servant; Christ is the Son, the Heir, and Lord of all things, "the Lord from heaven." It cannot be denied, that grace was shown in the first covenant: but it is as far exceeded by the grace of the second covenant, as the twilight is by the light of the mid-day.

III. What branches are taken out of the natural stock, and grafted into this vine? *Answer.* These are the elect, and none other. They, and they only, are grafted into Christ; and consequently none but they are cut off from the killing stock. For them alone he intercedes, "That they may be one in him and his Father," John xvii. 9—23. Faith, the bond of this union, is given to none else; it is the faith of God's elect, Tit. i. 1. The Lord passes by many branches growing on the natural stock, and cuts off only here one, and there one, and grafts them into the true vine, according as free love hath determined. Often does he pitch upon the most unlikely branch, leaving the top boughs; passing by the mighty and the noble, and calling the weak, base, and despised, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. Yea, he often leaves the fair and smooth, and takes the rugged and knotty; "and such were some of you, but ye are washed," &c. 1 Cor. vi. 11. If we inquire why so? We find no other reason but because they were chosen in him, Eph. i. 4; "predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ," ver. 5. Thus are they gathered together in Christ, while the rest are left growing on their natural stock, to be afterwards bound up in bundles for the fire. Therefore, to whomsoever the Gospel may come in vain, it will have a blessed effect on God's elect, Acts xiii. 48, "as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." Where the Lord has much people, the gospel will have much success, sooner or later. Such as are to be saved, will be added to the mystical body of Christ.

IV. I am now to shew how the branches are cut off from the natural stock, the first Adam, and grafted into the true vine, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks to the Husbandman, not to the branch, that is cut off from its natural stock, and grafted into a new one. The sinner, in his coming off from the first stock, is passive, and neither can nor will come off from it of his own accord, but clings to it, till almighty power makes him to fall off, John vi. 44, "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him." And chap. v. 40, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have

life." The ingrafted branches are "God's husbandry," 1 Cor. iii. 9, "The planting of the Lord," Isa. lxi. 3.—The ordinary means he makes use of, in this work, is the ministry of the word, 1 Cor. iii. 9, "We are labourers together with God." But the efficacy thereof is wholly from him, whatever the minister's parts or piety be, ver. 7, "Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." The apostles preached to the Jews, yet the body of that people remained in infidelity, Rom. x. 16, "Who hath believed our report?" Yea, Christ himself, who spoke as never man spoke, says concerning the success of his own ministry, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought," Isa. xlix. 4. The branches may be hacked by the preaching of the word; but the stroke will never go through, till it is carried home by the omnipotent arm. However, God's ordinary way is, "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 21.

The cutting of the branch from the natural stock, is performed by the pruning knife of the law, in the hand of the Spirit of God, Gal. ii. 19, "For I, through the law, am dead to the law." It is by the bond of the covenant of works, as I said before, that we are knit to our natural stock: therefore, as a wife, unwilling to be put away, pleads and hangs by the marriage tie; so do men by the covenant of works. They hold by it, like the man who held the ship with his hands; and when one hand was cut off, held it with the other; and when both were cut off, held it with his teeth. This will appear from a distinct view of the Lord's works on men, in bringing them off from the old stock; which I offer in the following particulars:—

1. When the Spirit of the Lord comes to deal with a person, to bring him to Christ, he finds him in Laodicea's case, in a sound sleep of security, dreaming of heaven and the favour of God, though full of sin against the Holy One of Israel, Rev. iii. 17, "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Therefore he darts in some beams of light into the dark soul; and lets the man see that he is a lost man, if he turn not over a new leaf, and betake himself to a new course of life. Thus, by the Spirit of the Lord acting as a spirit of bondage, there is a criminal court erected in the man's breast; where he is arraigned, accused, and condemned for breaking the law of God, "convicted of sin and judgment," John xvi. 8. And now he can no longer sleep securely in his former course of life. This is the first stroke which the branch gets, in order to cutting off.

2. Hereupon the man forsakes his former profane courses, his lying, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, stealing, and such like practices; though they be dear to him as right eyes, he will rather quit them

than ruin his soul. The ship is likely to sink, and therefore he throws his goods overboard, that he himself may not perish. Now he begins to bless himself in his heart, and looks joyfully on his evidences for heaven; thinking himself a better servant to God than many others, Luke xviii. 11, "God, I thank thee, I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers," &c. But he soon gets another stroke with the axe of the law, shewing him that it is only he that doeth what is written in the law, that can be saved by it; and that his negative holiness is too scanty a covering from the storm of God's wrath. Thus, although his sins of commission only were heavy on him before, his sins of omission now crowd into his thoughts, attended with a train of law curses and vengeance. And each of the ten commandments discharges thunder-claps of wrath against him for his omission of required duties.

3. Upon this he turns to a positively holy course of life. He not only is not profane, but he performs religious duties: he prays, seeks the knowledge of the principles of religion, strictly observes the Lord's day, and, like Herod, does many things, and hears sermons gladly. In one word, there is a great conformity, in his outward conversation, to the letter of both tables of the law. There is a mighty change in the man, which his neighbours cannot miss taking notice of. Hence he is cheerfully admitted by the godly into their society, as a praying person; and can confer with them about religious matters, yea, and about soul exercise, which some are not acquainted with; and their good opinion of him confirms his good opinion of himself. This step in religion is fatal to many, who never get beyond it. But here the Lord gives the elect branch a farther stroke. Conscience flies in the man's face, for some wrong steps in his conversation, the neglect of some duty, or commission of some sin, which is a blot in his conversation; and then the flaming sword of the law appears again over his head, and the curse rings in his ears, for that he "continueth not in *all things* written in the law, to do them," Gal. iii. 10.

4. On this account, he is obliged to seek another remedy for his disease. He goes to God, confesses his sin, seeks the pardon of it, promising to watch against it for the time to come; and so finds ease, and thinks he may very well take it, seeing the scripture saith, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," 1 John i. 9; not considering that he grasps at a privilege, which is theirs only who are grafted into Christ, and under the covenant of grace, and which the branches yet growing on the old stock cannot plead.—And here sometimes there are formal and express vows made against such and such sins, and binding to such and

such duties. Thus many go on all their days, knowing no other religion, than to perform duties, and to confess, and pray for pardon of that wherein they fail, promising themselves eternal happiness, though they are utter strangers to Christ. Here many elect ones have been cast down wounded, and many reprobrates have been slain, while the wounds of neither of them have been deep enough to cut them off from their natural stock. But the Spirit of the Lord gives yet a deeper stroke to the branch which is to be cut off, shewing him, that, as yet, he is but an outside saint, and discovering to him the filthy lusts lodged in his heart, which he took no notice of before, Rom. vii. 9, "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Then he sees his heart to be full of sinful lusts, covetousness, pride, malice, filthiness and the like. Now, as soon as the door of the chambers of his imagery is thus opened to him, and he sees what they do there in the dark, his outside religion is blown up as insufficient; and he learns a new lesson in religion, namely, "That he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly," Rom. ii. 28.

5. Upon this he goes farther, even to inside religion; sets to work more vigorously than ever, mourns over the evils of his heart, and strives to bear down the weeds which he finds growing in that neglected garden. He labours to curb his pride and passion, and to banish speculative impurities; prays more fervently, hears attentively, and strives to get his heart affected in every religious duty he performs; and thus he comes to think himself, not only an outside, but an inside Christian.—Wonder not at this, for there is nothing in it beyond the power of nature, or what one may attain to under a vigorous influence of the covenant of works; therefore another yet deeper stroke is given. The law charges home on the man's conscience, that he was a transgressor from the womb; that he came into the world a guilty creature; and that in the time of his ignorance, and even since his eyes were opened, he has been guilty of many actual sins, either altogether overlooked by him or not sufficiently mourned over, for spiritual sores, not healed by the blood of Christ, but skinned over some other way, so as to be easily irritated, and soon to break out again; therefore the law takes him by the throat, saying, "Pay what thou owest."

6. Then the sinner says in his heart, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all;" and so falls to work to pacify an offended God, and to atone for those sins. He renews his repentance, such as it is; bears patiently the afflictions laid upon him; yea, he afflicts himself, denies himself the use of his lawful comforts, sighs deeply mourns bitterly, cries with tears for a pardon, till he has wrought up his heart to a conceit of having obtained it: having thus done

penance for what is past, he resolves to be a good servant to God, and to hold on in outward and inward obedience, for the time to come. —But the stroke must go nearer the heart yet, ere the branch falls off. The Lord discovers to him, in the glass of the law, how he sinneth in all he does, even when he does the best he can; and therefore the dreadful sound returns to his ears, Gal. iii. 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things," &c. "When ye fasted and mourned," saith the Lord, "did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?" Will muddy water make clean clothes? Will you satisfy for one sin with another? Did not your thoughts wander in such a duty? Were not your affections flat in another? Did not your heart give a sinful look to such an idol? And did it not rise in a fit of impatience under such an affliction? "Should I accept this of your hands? Cursed be the deceiver, which sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing," Mal. i. 13, 14. And thus he becomes so far broken off, that he sees he is not able to satisfy the demands of the law.

7. Hence, like a broken man, who finds he is not able to pay all his debt, he goes about to compound with his creditor. And, being in pursuit of ease and comfort, he does what he can to fulfil the law; and wherein he fails, he trusts that God will accept the will for the deed. Thus doing his duty, and having a will to do better, he cheats himself into persuasion of the goodness of his state: and hereby thousands are ruined. But the elect get another stroke, which loosens their hold in this case. The doctrine of the law is borne in on their consciences, demonstrating to them, that exact and perfect obedience is required by it, under pain of the curse; and that it is doing, and not wishing to do, which will avail. Wishing to do better will not answer the law's demands; and therefore the curse sounds again, "Cursed is every one that continueth not—to do them;" that is, actually to do them. In vain is wishing then.

3. Being broken off from all hopes of compounding with the law, he falls to borrowing. He sees that all he can do to obey the law, and all his desires to be and to do better, will not save his soul: therefore he goes to Christ, entreating, that his righteousness may make up what is wanting in his own, and cover all the defects of his doings and sufferings; that so God, for Christ's sake, may accept them, and thereupon be reconciled. Thus doing what he can to fulfil the law, and looking to Christ to make up all his defects, he comes at length to sleep securely again. Many persons are ruined this way. This was the error of the Galatians, which Paul, in his epistle to them, disputes against. But the Spirit of God breaks off the sinner from this hold also, by bringing home to his conscience that great truth, Gal. iii. 12, "The law is not of faith, but the man

that doeth them shall live in them." There is no mixing of the law and faith in this business; the sinner must hold by one of them, and let the other go. The way of the law, and the way of faith, are so far different, that it is not possible for a sinner to walk in the one, unless he comes off from the other: and if he be for doing, he must do all alone; Christ will not do a part for him, if he do not all. A garment pieced up of sundry sorts of righteousness, is not a garment meet for the court of heaven. Thus the man is like one in a dream, who thought he was eating, but being awakened by a stroke, behold his soul is faint; his heart sinks in him like a stone, while he finds that he can neither bear his burden himself alone, nor can he get help under it.

9. What can he do who must needs pay, and yet has not enough of his own to bring him out of debt; nor can borrow so much, and is ashamed to beg?—What can such a one do, I say, but sell himself, as the man under the law, that was, become poor? Lev. xxv. 47. Therefore the sinner, beat off from so many holds, attempts to make a bargain with Christ, and to sell himself to the Son of God, if I may so speak, solemnly promising and vowing, that he will be a servant to Christ, as long as he lives, if he will save his soul. And here, the sinner often makes a personal covenant with Christ, resigning himself to him on these terms; yea, and takes the sacrament, to make the bargain sure. Hereupon the man's great care is, how to obey Christ, keep his commandments, and so fulfil his bargain. In this the soul finds a false, unsound peace, for a while; till the Spirit of the Lord gives another stroke, to cut off the man from this refuge of lies likewise. And that happens in this manner: when he fails of the duties he engaged to perform, and falls again into the sin he covenanted against, it is powerfully carried home on his conscience, that his covenant is broken; so all his comfort goes, and terrors afresh seize on his soul, as one that has broken covenant with Christ. Commonly the man to help himself, renews his covenant, but breaks it again as before. And how is it possible it should be otherwise, seeing he is still upon the old stock? Thus the work of many, all their days, as to their souls, is nothing but a making and breaking such covenants, over and over again.

Objection. Some perhaps will say, "Who liveth, and sinneth not? Who is there that faileth not of the duties he has engaged to? If you reject this way as unsound, who then can be saved?" *Answer.* True believers will be saved, namely, all who do by faith take hold of God's covenant. But this kind of covenant is men's own covenant, devised of their own heart; not God's covenant, revealed in the gospel of his grace: and the making of it is nothing else but

the making of a covenant of works with Christ, confounding the law and the Gospel; a covenant he will never subscribe to, though we should sign it with our heart's blood. Rom. iv. 14, 16, "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.—Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed." Chap. xi. 6, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work." God's covenant is everlasting; once in and never out of it again; and the mercies of it are sure mercies, Isa. lv. 3. But that covenant of yours is a tottering covenant, never sure, but broken every day. It is a mere servile covenant, giving Christ service for salvation; but God's covenant is a filial covenant, in which the sinner takes Christ, and his salvation freely offered, and so becomes a son, John i. 12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God:" and being become a son, he serves his Father, not that the inheritance may become his, but because it is his, through Jesus Christ. See Gal. iv. 24, and onward. To enter into that false covenant, is to buy from Christ with money; but to take hold of God's covenant, is to buy of him without money and without price, Isa. lv. 1, that is to say, to beg of him. In that covenant men work for life; in God's covenant they come to Christ for life, and work from life. When a person under that covenant fails in his duty, all is gone; the covenant must be made over again. But under God's covenant, although the man fail in his duty, and for his failure falls under the discipline of the covenant, and lies under the weight of it, till such time as he has recourse anew to the blood of Christ for pardon, and renew his repentance; yet all that he trusted to, for life and salvation, namely, the righteousness of Christ, still stands entire, and the covenant remains firm. See Rom. vii. 24, 25; and chap. viii. 1.

Now, though some men spend their lives in making and breaking such covenants of their own, the terror on the breaking of them be coming weaker and weaker, by degrees, till at last it creates them little or no uneasiness; yet the man, in whom the good work is carried on, till it be accomplished in cutting him off from the old stock, finds these covenants to be as rotten cords, broken at every touch; and the terror of God being thereupon redoubled on his spirit and, the waters at every turn getting in unto his very soul, he is obliged to cease from catching hold of such covenants and to seek help some other way.

10. Therefore the man comes at length to beg at Christ's door for

mercy; but yet he is a proud beggar, standing on his personal worth. For, as the papists have Mediators to plead for them, with the one only Mediator, so the branches of the old stock have always something to produce, which they think may commend them to Christ, and engage him to take their cause in hand. They cannot think of coming to the spiritual market, without money in their hand. They are like persons who have once had an estate of their own, but are reduced to extreme poverty, and forced to beg. When they come to beg, they still remember their former character; and though they have lost their substance: yet they retain much of their former spirit: therefore they cannot think that they ought to be treated as ordinary beggars, but deserve a particular regard; and, if that be not given them, their spirits rise against him to whom they address themselves for a supply. Thus God gives the unhumbled sinner many common mercies, and shuts him not up in the pit according to his deserving; but all this is nothing in his eyes. He must be set down at the children's table, otherwise he reckons himself hardly dealt with, and wronged: for he is not yet brought so low, as to think God may be justified when he speaks against him, and clear from all iniquity, when he judgeth him according to his real demerit, Psalm li. 4. He thinks, perhaps, that, even before he was enlightened, he was better than many others; he considers his reformation of life, his repentance, the grief and tears which his sin has cost him, his earnest desires after Christ, his prayers and wrestlings for mercy; and uses all these now as bribes for mercy, laying no small weight upon them in his addresses to the throne of grace. But here the Spirit of the Lord shoots his arrows quickly into the man's heart, whereby his confidence in these things is sunk and destroyed; and, instead of thinking himself better than many, he is made to see himself worse than any. The faults in his reformation of life are discovered; his repentance appears to him no better than the repentance of Judas; his tears like Esau's, and his desires after Christ to be selfish and loathsome, like those who sought Christ because of the loaves, John vi. 26. His answer from God seems now to be, Away, proud beggar, "How shall I put thee among the children?" He seems to look sternly on him, for his slighting of Jesus Christ by unbelief, which is a sin he scarcely discerned before. But now at length he beholds it in its crimson colours, and is pierced to the heart, as with a thousand darts, while he sees how he has been going on blindly, sinning against the remedy of sin, and, in the whole course of his life, trampling on the blood of the Son of God. And now he is, in his own eyes, the miserable object of law vengeance, yea, and gospel vengeance too.

11. The man being thus far humbled, will no more plead, "he is worthy for whom Christ should do this thing;" but, on the contrary, looks on himself as unworthy of Christ, and unworthy of the favour of God. We may compare him, in this case, to the young man who followed Christ, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; who, when the young men laid hold of him, left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked," Mark xiv. 51, 52. Even so the man had been following Christ, in the thin and cold garment of his own personal worthiness: but by it, even by it, which he so much trusted to, the law catches hold of him, to make him prisoner; and then he is fain to leave it, and flees away naked—yet not to Christ, but from him. If you now tell him he is welcome to Christ, if he will come to him; he is apt to say, Can such a vile and unworthy wretch as I, be welcome to the holy Jesus? If a plaster be applied to his wounded soul, it will not stick. He says, "depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord," Luke v. 8. No man needs speak to him of his repentance, for his comfort; he can quickly espy such faults in it as makes it naught: nor of his tears; for he is assured they have never come into the Lord's bottle. He disputes himself away from Christ; and concludes, now that he has been such a slighter of Christ, and is such an unholy and vile creature, that he cannot, he will not, he ought not to come to Christ; and that he must either be in better case, or else he will never believe. Hence he now makes the strongest efforts to amend what was amiss in his way before: he prays more earnestly than ever, mourns more bitterly, strives against sin in heart and life more vigorously, and watches more diligently, if by any means he may at length be fit to come to Christ. One would think the man is well humbled now: but, ah! deep pride lurks under the veil of this seeming humility; like a kindly branch of the old stock, he adheres still, and will not submit to the righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3. He will not come to the market of free grace, without money. He is bidden to the marriage of the King's Son, where the bridegroom himself furnishes all the guests with wedding garments, stripping them of their own: but he will not come, because he wants a wedding garment; although he is very busy in making one ready. This is sad work; and therefore he must have a deeper stroke yet, else he is ruined. This stroke is given him with the axe of the law, in its irritating power. Thus the law, girding the soul with cords of death, and holding it in with the rigorous commands of obedience, under the pain of the curse; and God, in his holy and wise conduct, withdrawing his restraining grace, corruption is irritated, lusts become violent; and the more they are striven against the more they

rage, like a furious horse checked with the bit. Then corruptions set up their heads, which he never saw in himself before. Here oft-times, atheism, blasphemy, and, in one word, horrible things concerning God, terrible thoughts concerning the faith, arise in his breast; so that his heart is a very hell within him. Thus, while he is sweeping the house of his heart, not yet watered with gospel grace, those corruptions which lay quiet before, in neglected corners, fly up and down in it like dust. He is as one who is mending the bank of a river, and while he is repairing breaches in it, and strengthening every part of it, a mighty flood comes down, and overturns his works, and drives all away before it, both that which was newly laid, and what was laid before. Read Rom. vii. 8—13. This is a stroke which goes to the heart: and by it, his hope of making himself more fit to come to Christ, is cut off.

12. Now the time is come, when the man, between hope and despair, resolves to go to Christ as he is; and therefore, like a dying man, stretching himself just before his breath goes out, he rallies the broken forces of his soul, tries to believe, and in some sort lays hold on Jesus Christ. And now the branch hangs on the old stock by one single tack of a natural faith, produced by the natural vigour of one's own spirit, under a most pressing necessity, Psalm lxxviii. 34, 35, "When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer." Hos. viii. 2, "Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee." But the Lord, never failing to perfect his work, fetches yet another stroke, whereby the branch falls quite off. The Spirit of God convincingly discovers to the sinner his utter inability to do any thing that is good, and so he dieth, Rom. vii. 9. That voice powerfully strikes through his soul, "How can ye believe?" John v. 44. Thou canst no more believe, than thou canst reach up thine hand to heaven, and bring Christ down from thence. Thus at length he sees, that he can neither help himself by working, nor by believing; and having no more to hang by on the old stock, he therefore falls off. While he is distressed thus, seeing himself likely to be swept away with the flood of God's wrath, and yet unable so much as to stretch forth a hand to lay hold of a twig of the tree of life, growing on the bank of the river, he is taken up, and ingrafted in the true vine, the Lord Jesus Christ giving him the Spirit of faith.

By what has been said upon this head, I design not to rack or distress tender consciences; for though there are but few such at this day, yet God forbid that I should offend any of Christ's little ones. But, alas! a dead sleep is fallen upon this generation, they

will not be awakened, let us go ever so near to the quick: therefore I fear that there is another sort of awakening abiding this sermon-proof generation, which shall make the ears of them that hear it tingle. However, I would not have this to be looked upon as the sovereign God's stinted method of breaking off sinners from the old stock. But this I maintain as a certain truth, that all who are in Christ have been broken off from all these several confidences; and that they who were never broken off from them, are yet in their natural stock. Nevertheless, if the house be pulled down, and the old foundation razed, it is much the same whether it was taken down stone by stone, or whether it was undermined, and all fell down together.

Now it is that the branch is ingrafted in Jesus Christ. And as the law, in the hand of the Spirit of God, was the instrument to cut off the branch from the natural stock; so the Gospel, in the hand of the same Spirit, is the instrument used for ingrafting it into the supernatural stock, 1 John i. 3. "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." See Isaiah lxi. 1—3. The Gospel is the silver cord let down from heaven, to draw perishing sinners to land. And though the preaching of the law prepares the way of the Lord; yet it is in the word of the Gospel that Christ and a sinner meet. Now, as in the natural grafting, the branch being taken up is put into the stock, and being put into it, becomes one with it, so that they are united; even so in the spiritual ingrafting, Christ apprehends the sinner, and the sinner, being apprehended of Christ, apprehends him, and so they become one, Phil. iii. 12.

First, Christ apprehends the sinner by his Spirit, and draws him to himself, 1 Cor. xii. 13, "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body." The same Spirit which is in the Mediator himself, he communicates to his elect in due time, never to depart from them, but to abide in them as a principle of life. The soul is now in the hands of the Lord of life, and possessed by the Spirit of life; how can it then but live? The man gets a ravishing sight of Christ's excellence in the glass of the gospel: he sees him a full, suitable, and willing Saviour; and gets a heart to take him for and instead of all. The Spirit of faith furnishes him feet to come to Christ, and hands to receive him. What by nature he could not do, by grace he can, the Holy Spirit working in him the work of faith with power.

Secondly, The sinner, thus apprehended, apprehends Christ by faith, and is one with the blessed stock, Eph. iii. 17, "That Christ

may dwell in your hearts by faith." The soul that before tried many ways of escape, but all in vain, now looks with the eye of faith, which proves the healing look. As Aaron's rod, laid up in the tabernacle, budded, and brought forth buds, Numb. xvii. 8; so the dead breach, apprehended by the Lord of life, put into, and bound up with the glorious quickening stock, by the Spirit of life buds forth in actual believing on Jesus Christ, whereby this union is completed. "We, having the same Spirit of faith—believe," 2 Cor. iv. 13. Thus the stock and the graft are united, Christ and the Christian are married, faith being the soul's consent to the spiritual marriage covenant, which as it is proposed in the gospel to mankind-sinners indefinitely, so it is demonstrated, attested, and brought home to the man in particular, by the Holy Spirit: and so he, being joined to the Lord, is one Spirit with him. Hereby a believer lives in and for Christ, and Christ lives in and for the believer, Gal. ii. 20, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Hos. iii. 3, "Thou shalt not be for another man, so will I also be for thee." The bonds, then, of this blessed union are, the Spirit on Christ's part, and faith on the believer's part.

Now both the souls and bodies of believers are united to Christ. "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," 1 Cor. vi. 17. The very bodies of believers have this honour put upon them, that they are "the temple of the Holy Ghost," ver. 19, and "the members of Christ," ver. 15. When they sleep in the dust, they sleep in Jesus, 1 Thess. iv. 14; and it is in virtue of this union they shall be raised up out of the dust again, Rom. viii. 11, "He shall quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." In token of this mystical union, the church of believers is called by the name of her Head and Husband, 1 Cor. xii. 12, "For as the body is one, and hath many members—so also is Christ."

Use. From what is said, we may draw the following inferences:

1. The preaching of the law is most necessary. He that would ingraft, must needs use the pruning-knife.—Sinners have many contrivances to keep them from Christ; many things by which they keep their hold of the natural stock; therefore they have need to be closely pursued, and hunted out of their skulking holes, and refuges of lies.

2. Yet it is the Gospel that crowns the work: "The law makes nothing perfect." The law lays open the wound, but it is the Gospel that heals it. The law "strips a man, wounds him and leaves him half dead:" the Gospel "binds up his wounds, pouring in wine and oil," to heal them. By the law we are broken off, but it is by the Gospel we are taken up and implanted in Christ.

3. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. We are told of a monster in nature, having two bodies differently animated, as appeared from contrary affections at one and the same time; but so united, that they were served with the self-same legs. Even so, however men may cleave to Christ, "call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel," Isa xlviii. 2, and may be bound up as branches in him, John xv. 2, by the outward ties of sacraments; yet if the Spirit that dwells in Christ, dwell not in them, they are not one with him. There is a great difference between adhesion and ingrafting. The ivy clasps and twists itself about the oak, but it is not one with it, for it still grows on its own root: so, to allude to Isa. iv. 1, many professors "take hold" of Christ, "and eat their own bread, and wear their own apparel, only they are called by his name." They stay themselves upon him, but grow upon their own root: they take them to support their hopes, but their delights are elsewhere.

4. The union between Christ and his mystical members is firm and indissoluble. Were it so that the believer only apprehended Christ, but Christ apprehended not him, we could promise little as the stability of such a union; it might quickly be dissolved: but as the believer apprehends Christ by faith, so Christ apprehends him by his Spirit, and none shall pluck him out of his hand.—Did the child only keep hold of the nurse, it might at length grow weary, and let go its hold, and so fall away: but if she have her arms about the child, it is in no hazard of falling away, even though it be not actually holding by her. So, whatever sinful intermissions may happen in the exercise of faith; yet the union remains sure, by reason of the constant indwelling of the spirit. Blessed Jesus! "All his saints are in thy hand," Deut. xxxiii. 3. It is observed by some that the word Abba, is the same whether you read it forward or backward: whatever the believer's case be, the Lord is still to him, Abba, Father.

5. They have an unsafe hold of Christ, whom he has not apprehended by his Spirit. There are many half marriages here, where the soul apprehends Christ, but is not apprehended of him. Hence, many fall away, and never rise again; they let go their hold of Christ; and when that is gone, all is gone. These are "the branches in Christ that bear not fruit, which the husbandman taketh away," John xv. 2. *Question.* How can that be? *Answer.* These branches are set in the stock by a profession, or an unsound hypocritical faith; they are bound up with it, in the external use of the sacraments; but the stock and they are never knit; therefore

they cannot bear fruit. And they need not be cut off, nor broken off; they are by the Husbandman only taken away; or, as the word primarily signifies, lifted up, and so taken away, because there is nothing to hold them; they are indeed bound up with the stock, but were never united to it.

Question. How shall I know if I am apprehended of Christ? *Answer.* You may be satisfied in this inquiry, if you consider and apply these two things:

1. When Christ apprehends a man by his Spirit, he is so drawn, that he comes away to Christ, with his whole heart: for true believing is believing with all the heart, Acts viii. 37. Our Lord's followers are like those who followed Saul at first, men whose hearts God has touched, 1 Sam. x. 26. When the Spirit pours in overcoming grace, they pour out their hearts like water before him, Psalm lxii. 8. They flow unto him like a river, Isa. ii. 2, "All nations shall flow unto it," namely, to the "mountain of the Lord's house." It denotes not only the abundance of converts, but the disposition of their souls in coming to Christ; they come heartily and freely, as drawn with loving-kindness, Jer. xxxi. 3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power," Psalm cx. 3, that is, free, ready, open-hearted, giving themselves to thee as free-will offering. When the bridegroom has the bride's heart, it is a right marriage: but some give their hand to Christ, who give him not their heart. They that are only driven to Christ by terror, will surely leave him again when that terror is gone. Terror may break a heart of stone, but the pieces into which it is broken still continue to be stone: terrors cannot soften it into a heart of flesh. Yet terrors may begin the work which love crowns. The strong wind, and the earthquake, and the fire going before; the still small voice, in which the Lord is, may come after them. When the blessed Jesus is seeking sinners to match with him, they are bold and perverse: they will not speak with him, till he has wounded them, made them captives, and bound them with the cords of death. When this is done, then it is that he comes to them, and wins their hearts. The Lord tells us, Hos. ii. 16—20, that is chosen Israel shall be married unto himself. But how will the bride's consent be won? Why, in the first place, he will bring her into the wilderness, as he did the people when he brought them out of Egypt, ver. 14. There she will be hardly dealt with, scorched with thirst, and bitten of serpents: and then he will speak comfortably to her; or, as the expression is, he will speak unto her heart. The sinner is first driven, and then drawn unto Christ. It is with the soul as with Noah's dove, she was forced back again to the ark, because she

could find nothing else to rest upon: but when she returned, she would have rested on the outside of it, if Noah had not "put forth his hand and pulled her in," Gen. viii. 9. The Lord sends his avenger of blood in pursuit of the criminal, who with a sad heart leaves his own city, and with tears in his eyes parts with his old acquaintances, because he dare not stay with them, and he flees for his life to the city of refuge. This is not all his choice, it is forced work; necessity has now law. But when he comes to the gates, and sees the beauty of the place, the excellency and loveliness of it charm him; and then he enters it with heart and good-will, saying, "This is my rest, and here I will stay;" and, as one said in another case, "I had perished, unless I had perished."

2. When Christ apprehends a soul, the heart is disengaged from, and turned against sin. As in cutting off the branch from the old stock, the great idol self is brought down, the man is powerfully taught to deny himself; so, in apprehending the sinner by the Spirit, that union is dissolved which was between the man and his lusts, while he was in the flesh, as the apostle expresses it, Rom. vii. 5. His heart is loosened from them, though formerly as dear to him as the members of his body; as his eyes, legs, or arms; and, instead of taking pleasure in them as before, he longs to be rid of them. When the Lord Jesus comes to a soul, in the day of converting grace, he finds it like Jerusalem, in the day of her nativity, Ezek. xvi. 4, drawing its fulsome nourishment and satisfaction from its lusts: but he cuts off this communication, that he may impart to the soul his own consolations, and give it rest in himself. And thus the Lord wounds the head and heart of sin, and the soul comes to him, saying, "Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit," Jer. xvi. 19.

V. I proceed to speak of the benefits flowing to true believers from their union with Christ. The chief of the particular benefits which believers have by it, are justification, peace, adoption, sanctification, growth in grace, fruitfulness in good works, acceptance of these works, establishment in the state of grace, support and a special conduct of providence about them. As for communion with Christ, it is such a benefit, as being the immediate consequence of union with him, comprehends all the rest as mediate ones. For as the branch, immediately upon its union with the stock, has communion with the stock in all that is in it; so the believer, uniting with Christ, has communion with him; in which he launches forth into an ocean of happiness, is led into a paradise of pleasures, and has a saving interest in the treasure hid in the field of the Gospel, the unsearchable riches of Christ. As soon as

the believer is united to Christ, Christ himself, in whom all fulness dwells, is his, Cant. iii. 16, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." And "how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32, "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. This communion with Christ is the great comprehensive blessing necessarily flowing from our union with him. Let us now consider the particular benefits flowing from it before mentioned.

The first particular benefit that a sinner has by his union with Christ, is justification; for, being united to Christ, he has communion with him in his righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness." He stands no more condemned, but justified before God, as being in Christ, Rom. viii. 1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The branches hereof are, pardon of sin, and personal acceptance.

1. His sins are pardoned, the guilt of them is removed. The bond obliging him to pay his debt is cancelled. God the Father takes the pen, dips it in the blood of his Son, crosses the sinner's accounts, and blots them out of his debt-book. The sinner out of Christ is bound over to the wrath of God; he is under an obligation in law to go to the prison of hell, and there to lie till he has paid the utmost farthing. This arises from the terrible sanction with which the law is guarded, which is no less than death, Gen. ii. 17. So that the sinner, passing the bounds assigned him, is as Shimei in another case, a man of death, 1 Kings ii. 42. But now, being united to Christ, God saith, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom," Job xxxiii. 24, The sentence of condemnation is reversed, the believer is absolved, and set beyond the reach of the condemning law. His sins, which were set before the Lord, Psalm xc. 8, so that they could not be hid, God now takes and casts them all behind his back, Isa. xxxviii. 17. Yea, he casts them into the depths of the sea, Micah vii. 19. What falls into a brook may be got up again, but what is cast into the sea cannot be recovered. But there are some shallow places in the sea: true, but their sins are not cast in there, but into the depths of the sea; and the depths of the sea are devouring depths, from whence they shall never come forth again. But what if they do not sink? He will cast them in with force, so that they shall go to the ground, and sink as lead in the mighty waters of the Redeemer's blood. They are not only forgiven, but forgotten, Jer. xxxi. 34, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." And

though their after-sins do in themselves deserve eternal wrath, and do actually make them liable to temporal strokes, and fatherly chastisements, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, Psalm lxxxix. 30—33, yet they can never be actually liable to eternal wrath, or the curse of the law; for they are dead to the law in Christ, Rom. vii. 4. They can never fall away from their union with Christ; neither can they be in Christ, and yet under condemnation at the same time, Rom. viii. 1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." This is an inference drawn from that doctrine of the believer's being dead to the law, set forth by the apostle, chap. vii. 1—6; as is clear from the second, third, and fourth verses of this eighth chapter. In this respect the justified man is the blessed man, unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, Psalm xxxii. 2; as one who has no design to charge a debt on another, sets it not down in his account-book.

2. The believer is accepted as righteous in God's sight, 2 Cor. v. 21. For he is "found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9. He could never be accepted of God, as righteous, upon the account of his own righteousness; because, at best, it is but imperfect; and all righteousness, properly so called, which can abide a trial before the throne of God, is perfect. The very name of it implies perfection: for unless a work is perfectly conformable to the law, it is not right, but wrong; and so cannot make a man righteous before God, whose judgment is according to truth. Yet if justice demand a righteousness of one that is in Christ, upon which he may be accounted righteous before the Lord, "Surely shall" such a "one say, In the Lord have I righteousness," Isa. xlv. 24. The law is fulfilled, its commands are obeyed, its sanction is satisfied. The believer's surety has paid the debt. It was exacted, and he answered for it.

Thus the person united to Christ is justified. You may conceive of the whole proceeding herein, in this manner. The avenger of blood pursuing the criminal, Christ, as the Saviour of lost sinners, doth by the Spirit apprehend him, and draw him to himself; and he, by faith, lays hold on Christ: so the Lord our righteousness, and the unrighteous creature, unite. From this union with Christ results a communion with him in his unsearchable riches, and consequently in his righteousness, that white raiment which he has for clothing of the naked, Rev. iii. 18. Thus the righteousness of Christ becomes his; and because it is by his unquestionable title, it is imputed to him; it is reckoned his in the judgment of God, which is always according to truth. And so the believing sinner, having

a righteousness which fully answers the demands of the law, he is pardoned and accepted as righteous. See Isa. xlv. 22—24; Rom. iii. 24; and chap. v. 1. Now he is a free man. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of those whom God justifieth? Can justice lay any thing to their charge? No; for it is satisfied. Can the law? No; for it has obtained all its demands on them in Jesus Christ, Gal. iii. 20, "I am crucified with Christ." What can the law require more, after it has wounded their head, poured in wrath in full measure into their soul, and cut off their life, and brought it into the dust of death, by doing all this to Jesus Christ, who is their head, Eph. i. 22; their soul, Acts ii. 25—27; and their life, Col. iii. 4? What is become of the sinner's own handwriting, which would prove the debt upon him? Christ has blotted it out, Col. ii. 14. But it may be, justice may get its eye upon it again. No; he took it out of the way. But O that it had been torn in pieces! may the sinner say. Yea, so it is; the nails that pierced Christ's hands and feet are driven through it; he nailed it. But what if the torn in pieces be set together again? They cannot be; for he nailed it to his cross, and his cross was buried with him, and will never rise again, seeing Christ dieth no more. Where is the face-covering that was upon the condemned man? Christ has destroyed it, Isa. xxv. 7. Where is death, that stood before the sinner with a grim face, and an open mouth, ready to devour him? Christ has swallowd it up in victory, ver. 8, Glory, glory, glory to him that thus "loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood."

The second benefit flowing from the same spring of union with Christ, and coming by the way of justification, is peace; peace with God, and peace of conscience, according to the measure of the sense the justified have of their peace with God, Rom. v. 1. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Chap. xiv. 17, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Whereas God was their enemy before, now he is reconciled to them in Christ: they are in a covenant of peace with him; and, as Abraham was, so are they the friends of God. He is well pleased with them in his beloved Son. His word, which spoke terror to them formerly, now speaks peace, if they rightly understand the language. And there is love in all dispensations towards them, which makes all work together for their good. Their consciences are purged of that guilt and filthiness which lay upon them: his conscience-purifying blood streams through their souls, by virtue of their union with him, Heb. ix. 14, "How much more shall the blood of Christ—purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!" The bonds laid on their

consciences by the Spirit of God, acting as the Spirit of bondage, are taken off, never more to be laid on, Rom. viii. 5, "For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear." Hereby the conscience is quieted, as soon as the soul becomes conscious of the application of that blood; which falls out sooner or later, according to the measure of faith, and as the only wise God sees meet to time it. Unbelievers may have troubled consciences, which they may get quieted again: but, alas! their consciences become peaceable before they become pure; so their peace is but the seed of greater horror and confusion. Carelessness may give ease for a while to a sick conscience; men neglecting its wounds, they close again of their accord, before the impure matter is removed. Many bury their guilt in the grave of an ill memory: conscience smarts a little; at length the man forgets his sin, and there is an end of it; but that is only an ease before death. Business, or the affairs of life, often give ease in this case. When Cain is banished from the presence of the Lord, he falls a-building of cities. When the evil spirit came upon Saul, he calls not for his Bible, nor for the priests to converse with him about his case; but for music, to play it away. So many, when their consciences begin to be uneasy, they fill their heads and hands with business, to divert themselves, and to regain ease at any rate. Yea, some will sin contrary to their convictions, and so do get some ease to their consciences, as Hazael gave ease to his master by stifling him. Again the performance of duties may give some ease to disqutied consciences; and this is all which legal professors have recourse to for quieting their consciences. When conscience is wounded they will pray, confess, mourn, and resolve to do so no more: and so they become whole again, without an application of the blood of Christ by faith. But they whose consciences are rightly quieted, come for peace and purification to the blood of sprinkling. Sin leaves a sting behind it, which one time or other will create them no little pain.

Elihu shews us both the case and cure, Job xxxiii.—Behold the case which a man may be in, whom God has thoughts of love to. He darts convictions into his conscience; and makes them stick so fast, that he cannot rid himself of them, ver. 16, "He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction. His very body sickens, ver. 19, "He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain" He loseth his appetite, ver. 20, "His life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat." His body pines away, so that there is nothing on him but skin and bone," ver. 21, "His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen stick out." Though

he is not prepared for death, he has no hope of life, ver. 22, "His soul draweth near unto the grave, and" which is the height of his misery, "his life to the destroyers;" he is looking every moment when devils, these destroyers, Rev. ix. 11, these murderers, or manslayers, John viii. 44, will come and carry away his soul to hell. O dreadful case? Is there any hope for such? Yes, there is hope. God will "keep back his soul from the pit," Job xxxiii. 18, although he bring him forward to the brink of it. Now, see how the sick man is cured. The physician's art cannot prevail here: the disease lies more inward than his medicines can reach. It is soul trouble that has brought the body into this disorder; and therefore the remedies must be applied to the sick man's soul and conscience. The physician for this case, must be a spiritual Physician; the remedies must be spiritual, a righteousness, a ransom, an atonement. Upon the application of these, the soul is cured, the conscience is quieted: and the body recovers, ver. 23—26, "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness: then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's, he shall return to the days of his youth. He shall pray unto God, and he shall be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy." The proper physician for this patient is a messenger, an interpreter, ver. 23, that is, as some expositors, not without ground, understand it, the great physician, Jesus Christ, whom Job had called his Redeemer, chap. xix. 25. He is a messenger, the "messenger of the covenant of peace," Mal. iii. 1, who comes seasonably to the sick man. He is an interpreter, the great interpreter of God's counsels of love to sinners, Job xxxiii. 23, "One among a thousand," even "the chief among ten thousand," Cant. v. 10. "One chosen out of the people," Psalm lxxxix. 19. One to whom "the Lord hath given the tongue of the learned —to speak a word in season to him that is weary," Isa. l. 4. It is he that is with him, by his Spirit, now, to "convince him of righteousness," John xvi. 8, as he was with him before, to "convince him of sin and of judgment." His work now is, to shew unto him his uprightness, or his righteousness, that is, the interpreter Christ's righteousness; which is the only righteousness, arising from the paying of a ransom, and upon which a sinner is delivered from going down to the pit, ver. 24. Thus Christ is said to declare God's name, Psalm xxii. 22, and to preach righteousness, Psalm xl. 9. The phrase is remarkable: it is not to shew unto the man, but unto man, his righteousness: which not obscurely intimates, that he is more than a man, who shews or declareth this righteousness. Com-

pare Amos iv. 13, "He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought." There seems to be in it a sweet allusion to the first declaration of this righteousness unto man, or, as the word is, unto Adam, after the fall, while he lay under terror from apprehensions of the wrath of God; which declaration was made by the messenger, the interpreter, namely, the eternal *Word*, the Son of God, called, the voice of the Lord God, Gen. iii. 8, and by him appearing, probably, in human shape. Now, while he by his Spirit, is the preacher of righteousness to the man, it is supposed that the man lays hold on the offered righteousness; whereupon the ransom is applied to him, and he is delivered from going down to the pit; for God hath a ransom for him. This is intimated to him by the words, "Deliver him," Job xxxiii. 24. So his conscience being purified by the blood of atonement, is pacified, and sweetly quieted. "He shall pray unto God—and see his face with joy," which before he beheld with horror, ver. 26; that is in New Testament language, "Having an high priest over the house of God," he shall "draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience," Heb. x. 21, 22. But then, what becomes of the body, the weak and weary flesh? Why, "his flesh shall be fresher than a child's, he shall return to the days of his youth," ver. 25. Yea, "All his bones," which were chastened with strong pain, ver. 19, "shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee?" Psalm xxxv. 10.

A third benefit flowing from union with Christ, is adoption. Believers, being united to Christ, become children of God, and members of the family of heaven. By their union with him, who is the Son of God by nature, they become the sons of God by grace, John i. 12. As when a branch is cut off from one tree, and grafted in the branch of another, the ingrafted branch, by means of its union with the adopting branch, as some not unfitly have called it, is made a branch of the same stock with that into which it is ingrafted: so sinners, being ingrafted into Jesus Christ, whose name is the *Branch*, his Father is their Father, his God their God, John xx. 17. And thus they, who are by nature children of the devil, become the children of God. They have the Spirit of adoption, Rom. viii. 15, namely, the Spirit of his Son, which brings them to God, as children to a Father; to pour out their complaints in his bosom, and to seek necessary supplies, Gal. iv. 6, "Because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Under all their weaknesses, they have fatherly pity and compassion shewn them, Psalm ciii. 13, "Like as a father pitieth his children; so the Lord pitieth them that fear

him."—Although they were but foundlings, found in a desert land; yet now "he keeps them as the apple of his eye," Deut. xxxii. 10. Whosoever pursues them, they have a refuge, Prov. xiv. 26, "His children shall have a place of refuge." In a time of common calamity, they have chambers of protection, where they may be hid until the indignation is overpast, Isa. xxvi. 20. And he is not only their refuge for protection, but their portion for provision, in that refuge; Psalm cxlii. 5, "Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living."—They are provided for, for eternity, Heb. xi. 16, "He hath prepared for them a city." And what he sees they have need of for time, they shall not want, Matt. vi. 31, 32, "Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Seasonable correction is likewise their privilege as sons: so they are not suffered to pass with their faults, as others who are not children, but servants of the family, who at length will be turned out of doors for their miscarriages, Heb. xii. 7, "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? They are heirs of, and shall inherit the promises, Heb. vi. 12. Nay, they are heirs of God, who himself is the portion of their inheritance, Psalm xvi. 5, "and joint-heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17. And because they are the children of the great King, and heirs of glory, they have angels for their attendants, who are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation," Heb. i. 14.

A fourth benefit is sanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification."—Being united to Christ, they partake of his Spirit, which is the Spirit of holiness. There is a fulness of the Spirit in Christ, and it is not like the fulness of a vessel, which only retains what is poured into it; but it is the fulness of a fountain for diffusion and communication, which is always sending forth its waters, and yet is always full. The Spirit of Christ, that spiritual sap, which is in the stock, and from thence is communicated to the branches, is the Spirit of grace, Zech. xii. 10. And where the Spirit of grace dwells, there will be found a confluence of all graces. Holiness is not one grace only, but all the graces of the Spirit; it is a constellation of graces; it is all the graces in their seed and root. And as the sap conveyed from the stock into the branch goes through it, and through every part of it; so the Spirit of Christ sanctifies the whole man. The poison of sin was diffused through the whole spirit, soul, and body of the man; and sanctifying grace pursues it into every corner, 1 Thess. v. 23. Every part of the man is sanctified,

though no part is perfectly so. The truth we are sanctified by is not held in the head, as in a prison; but runs, with its sanctifying influences, through heart and life. There are indeed some graces, in every believer, which appear as top-branches above the rest: as meekness in Moses, patience in Job; but seeing there is in every child of God, a holy principle going along with the holy law, in all the parts thereof, loving and approving of it: as it appears from their universal respect to the commands of God: it is evident that they are endowed with all the graces of the Spirit; because there cannot be less in the effect, than there was in the cause.

Now, this sanctifying Spirit, whereof believers partake, is unto them, 1. A spirit of mortification; "through the Spirit they mortify the deeds of the body," Rom. viii. 13. Sin is crucified in them, Gal. v. 24. They are planted together, namely, with Christ in the likeness of his death, which was a lingering death, Rom. vi. 5. Sin in the saint, though not quite dead, yet is dying. If it were dead, it would be taken down from the cross, and buried out of his sight: but it hangs there as yet, working and struggling under its mortal wounds. As, when a tree has got such a stroke as reaches the heart of it, all the leaves and branches begin to fade and decay: so, where the sanctifying Spirit comes, and breaks the power of sin, there is a gradual ceasing from it, and dying to it, in the whole man; so that he "no longer lives in the flesh to the lusts of men." He does not make sin his trade and business; it is not his great design to seek himself, and to satisfy his corrupt inclinations: but he is seeking for Immanuel's land; and is walking in the highway to it, the way which is called the way of holiness: though the wind from hell, that was on his back before, blows now full in his face, makes his travelling uneasy, and often drives him off the highway. 2. This Spirit is a Spirit of vivification to them; for he is the Spirit of life, and makes them live unto righteousness, Ezek. xxxvi. 27, "And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." Those who have been "planted together," with Christ, "in the likeness of his death, shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection," Rom. vi. 5. At Christ's resurrection, when his soul was re-united with his body, every member of that blessed body was enabled again to perform the actions of life: so the soul, being influenced by the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, is enabled more and more to perform all the actions of spiritual life. And as the whole of the law, and not some scraps of it only, is written on the holy heart; so believers are enabled to transcribe that law, in their conversation. Although they cannot write one line of it without blots, yet God, for Christ's sake, accepts of the performance, in point of sanctification; they being disciples to his own Son, and led by his own Spirit.

This sanctified Spirit, communicated by the Lord Jesus to his members, is the spiritual nourishment the branches have from the stock into which they are ingrafted; whereby the life of grace, given them in regeneration, is preserved, continued, and actuated. It is the nourishment whereby the new creature lives, and is nourished up towards perfection. Spiritual life needs to be fed, and must have supply of nourishment: and believers derive the same from Christ their head, whom the Father has appointed the head of influence to all his members, Col. ii. 19, "And not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, or supplied," &c. Now this supply is "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ," Phil. i. 19. The saints feed richly, "eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood," for their spiritual nourishment: yet our Lord himself teacheth us, that "it is the Spirit that quickeneth," John vi. 63, even that Spirit who dwells in his blessed body. The human nature is united to the divine nature, in the person of the Son, and so like the bowl in Zachariah's candlestick, chap. iv. lies at the fountain head, as the glorious means of conveyance of influences from the fountain of Deity. He receives not the Spirit by measure, but ever hath a fulness of the Spirit, by reason of that personal union. Hence believers, being united to the man Christ, as the seven lamps to the bowl, by their seven pipes, Zech. iv. 2, his flesh is to them meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed: for, feeding on that blessed body, that is, effectually applying Christ to their souls by faith, they partake more and more of that Spirit, who dwelleth therein, to their spiritual nourishment. The holiness of God can never admit of an immediate union with the sinful creature, nor, consequently, an immediate communion with it: yet the creature could not live the life of grace without communion with the fountain of life. Therefore, that the honour of God's holiness and the salvation of sinners might jointly be provided for, the second person of the glorious trinity took into a personal union with himself a sinless human nature; that so this holy, harmless, and undefiled humanity, might immediately receive a fulness of the Spirit, of which he might communicate to his members, by his divine power and efficacy. Suppose there were a tree, with its root in the earth, and its branches reaching to heaven, the vast distance between the root and the branches, would not interrupt the communication between the root and the top branch: even so, the distance between the man Christ, who is in heaven, and his members, who are on earth, cannot hinder the communication between them. What though the parts of mystical Christ, namely the head and the members, are not contiguous, as joined together in the way of corporal

union; the union is not therefore the less real and effectual. Yea, our Lord himself shews us, that though we eat his flesh in a corporeal and carnal manner, yet it would profit nothing, John vi. 63; we should not be one whit the holier thereby. But the members of Christ on earth, are united to their head in heaven, by the invisible bond of the self-same Spirit dwelling in both; in him as the head, and in them as the members. The wheels in Ezekiel's vision were not contiguous to the living creatures, yet were united to them by an invisible bond of one Spirit in both; so that, "when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them, and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up," Ezek. i. 19; "For," says the prophet, "the Spirit of the living creature was in the wheels," ver. 20.

Hence we may see the difference between true satisfaction, and that shadow of it, which is to be found among some strict professors of Christianity, who yet are not true Christians, are not regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, and is of the same kind with what has appeared in many sober heathens. True sanctification is the result of the soul's union with the holy Jesus, the first and immediate receptacle of the sanctifying Spirit; out of whose fulness his members do by virtue of their union with him, receive sanctifying influences. The other is the mere product of the man's own spirit, which, whatever it has, or seems to have, of the matter of true holiness, yet does not arise from the supernatural principles, nor to the high aims and ends thereof; for, as it comes from self, so it runs out into the dead sea of self again; and lies as wide of true holiness, as nature doth of grace. They who have this species of holiness, are like common boatmen, who serve themselves with their own oars: whereas the ship bound for Immanuel's land, sails by the blowings of the divine Spirit. How is it possible there should be true satisfaction without Christ? Can there be true sanctification without partaking of the Spirit of holiness? Can we partake of that Spirit, but by Jesus Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life?" The falling dew shall as soon make its way through the flinty rock, as the influences of grace come from God to sinners, any other way than through him whom the Father hath appointed the head of influences, Col. i. 19, "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell:" and chap. ii. 19, "And not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." Hence see how it comes to pass, that many fall away from their seeming sanctification, and never recover: it is because they are not branches truly knit to the true vine. Meanwhile others, recover from their

decays, because of their union with the life-giving stock, by the quickening Spirit, 1 John ii. 19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us."

A fifth benefit is growth in grace. "Having nourishment ministered, they increase with the increase of God." Col. ii. 19, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon," Psalm xcii. 12. Grace is of a growing nature; in the way to Zion they go from strength to strength. Though the holy man be at first a little child in grace, yet at length he becomes a young man; a father, 1 John ii. 13. Though he does but creep in the way to heaven sometimes, yet afterwards he walks, he runs, he mounts up with wings as eagles, Isa. xl. 31. If a branch grafted into a stock never grows, it is a plain evidence of its not having knit with the stock.

But some perhaps may say, "If all true Christians be growing ones, what shall be said of those who, instead of growing, are going back?" I answer, There is a great difference between the Christians growing simply, and his growing at all times. All true Christians do grow, but I do not say that they grow at all times. A tree, that has life and nourishment, grows to its perfection, yet it is not always growing; it grows not in the winter. Christians also have their winters, wherein the influences of grace, necessary for their growth, cease, Cant. v. 2, "I sleep." It is by faith the believer derives gracious influences from Jesus Christ; as each lamp in the candlestick received oil from the bowel, by the pipe going between them, Zech. iv. 2. Now, if that pipe be stoped, if the saint's faith lie dormant and inactive, then all the rest of the graces will become dim, and seem ready to be extinguished. In consequence whereof, depraved nature will gather strength, and become active. What then will become of the soul? Why, there is still one sure ground of hope. The saint's faith is not as the hypocrite's like a pipe laid short of the fountain, whereby there can be no conveyance: it still remains a bond of union between Christ and the soul; and therefore, because Christ lives, the believer shall live also, John xiv. 19. The Lord Jesus "puts in his hand by the hole of the door," and clears the means of conveyance; and then influences for growth flow, and the believer's graces look fresh and green again, Hos. xiv. 7, "They that dwell under his shadow shall return: they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine." In the worst of times, the saints have a principle of growth in them, 1 John iii. 9, "His seed remaineth in him." Therefore, after decays, they revive again: namely, when the winter is over, and the Sun

of righteousness returns to them with his warm influences. Mud thrown into a pool may lie there at ease; but if it be cast into a fountain, the spring will at length work it out, and run as clear as formerly. *Secondly*, Christians may mistake their growth, and that two ways. 1. By judging of their case according to their present feeling. They observe themselves, and cannot perceive themselves to be growing; but there is no reason thence to conclude they are not growing, Mark iv. 27, "The seed springs and grows up, he knoweth not how." Were a person to fix his eye ever so stedfastly on a growing tree, he would not see it growing; but if he compare the tree as it now is, with what it was some years ago, he will certainly perceive that it has grown. In like manner may the Christian know whether he be in a growing or declining state, by comparing his present with his former condition. 2. Christians may mistake their case, by measuring their growth by the advances of the top only, not of the root. Though a man be not growing taller, he may be growing stronger. If a tree be uniting with the ground, fixing itself in the earth, and spreading out its roots, it is certainly growing, although it be not higher than formerly. So, although a Christian may want the sweet consolations and flashes of affection which he had; yet, if he be growing in humility, self-denial, and sense of needy dependence on Jesus Christ, he is a growing Christian, Hos. xiv. 5, "I will be as the dew unto Israel, he shall cast forth his roots as Lebanon."

Question. "But do hypocrites grow at all? And if so, how shall we distinguish between their growth, and true Christian growth?" *Answer.* To the first part of the question, hypocrites do grow. The tares have their growth, as well as the wheat: the seed that fell among thorns did spring up, Luke viii. 7. Only it brought no fruit to perfection, ver. 14. Yea, a true Christian may have a false growth. James and John seemed to grow in the grace of holy zeal, when their spirits grew so hot in the cause of Christ, that they would have fired a whole village, for not receiving their Lord and Master, Luke ix. 54, "They said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?" But it was indeed no such thing; and therefore he turned and rebuked them, ver. 55, "and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." To the second part of the question it is answered, that there is a peculiar beauty in the true Christian growth, distinguishing it from all false growth: it is universal, regular, proportionable. It is a "growing up into Him in all things, which is the head," Eph. iv. 15. The growing Christian grows proportionably, in all the parts of the new man. Under the kindly

influences of the Sun of righteousness, believers "grow up as calves of the stall," Mal. iv. 2. You would think it a monstrous growth, in these creatures, if you saw their heads grow, and not their bodies; or if you saw one leg grow, and another not; if all the parts do not grow proportionably. Ay, but such is the growth of many in religion. They grow like rickety children, who have a big head, but a slender body; they get more knowledge into their heads, but no more holiness into their hearts and lives. They grow very hot outwardly, but very cold inwardly; like men in a fit of the ague. They are more taken up about the externals of religion than formerly; yet as great strangers to the power of godliness as ever. If a garden is watered with the hand, some of the plants will readily get much, some little, and some no water at all; and therefore some wither, while others are coming forward; but after a shower from the clouds, all come forward together. In like manner, all the graces of the Spirit grow proportionably, by the special influences of divine grace. The branches ingrafted in Christ, growing aright, do grow in all the several ways of growth at once. They grow inward, growing into Christ, Eph. iv. 15, uniting more closely with him; and cleaving more firmly to him, as the head of influences, which is the spring of all other true Christian growth. They grow outward in good works, in their life and conversation. They not only, with Naphtali, give goodly words; but, like Joseph, they are fruitful boughs. They grow upward in heavenly-mindedness, and contempt of the world; for their conversation is in heaven, Phil. iii. 20. And finally, they grow downward in humility and self-loathing. The branches of the largest growth in Christ, are, in their own eyes, "less than the least of all saints," Eph. iii. 8; "the chief of sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15; "more brutish than any man," Prov. xxx. 2. They see that they can do nothing, no, not so much as "think any thing, as of themselves," 2 Cor. iii. 5: that they deserve nothing, being "not worthy of the least of all the mercies showed unto them," Gen. xxxii. 10; and that they are nothing, 2 Cor. xii. 11.

A sixth benefit is fruitfulness. The branch ingrafted into Christ is not barren, but brings forth fruit, John xv. 5, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." For that very end are souls united to Christ, that they may bring forth fruit unto God, Rom. vii. 4. They that are barren may be branches in Christ by profession, but not by real implantation. Whoever are united to Christ, bring forth the fruit of gospel-obedience and true holiness. Faith is always followed with good works. The believer is not only come out of the grave of his natural state; but he has put off his grave-clothes, namely, reigning lusts, in which he walked,

like a ghost; being dead while he lived in them, Col. iii. 7, 8. For Christ has said of him, as of Lazarus, "Loose him, and let him go." Now that he has put on Christ, he personates him, so to speak, as a beggar in borrowed robes represents a king on the stage, walking as he also walked. Now the fruit of the Spirit in him, is in all goodness, Eph. v. 9. The fruits of holiness will be found in the hearts, lips, and lives of those who are united to Christ. The hidden man of the heart is not only a temple built for God, and consecrated to him; but used and employed for him, where love, fear, trust, and all the other parts of unseen religion, are exercised, Phil. iii. 3, "For we are the circumcision which worship God in the Spirit." The heart is no more the devil's common, where thoughts go free; for there even vain thoughts are hated, Psalm cxix. 113. But it is God's enclosure, hedged about as a garden for him, Cant. iv. 16. It is true, there are weeds of corruption there, because the ground is not yet perfectly cleared: but the man, in the day of his new creation, is set to dress it, and keep it. A live coal from the altar has touched his lips, and they are purified. Psalm xv. 1—3, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that speaketh the truth in his heart; he that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." There may be, indeed, a smooth tongue, where there is a false heart. The voice may be Jacob's, while the hand's are Esau's. But, "if any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain," James i. 26. The power of godliness will rule over the tongue, though a world of iniquity. If one be a Galilean, his speech will bewray him; he will speak, not the language of Ashdod, but the language of Canaan. He will neither be dumb in religion, nor will his tongue walk at random, seeing, to the double guard which nature hath given the tongue, grace hath added a third. The fruits of holiness will be found in his outward conversation; for he hath clean hands, as well as a pure heart, Psalm xxiv. 4. He is a godly man, and religiously discharges the duties of the first table of the law; he is a righteous man, and honestly performs the duties of the second table. In his conversation he is a good Christian, and a good neighbour too. He carries it towards God, as if men's eyes were upon him; and towards men, as believing God's eyes to be upon him. Those things which God hath joined in his law, he dares not put asunder in his practice.

Thus the branches in Christ are full of good fruits. And those fruits are a cluster of vital actions, whereof Jesus Christ is the principle and end. The principle; for he lives in them, and "the life

they live is by faith in the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20. The end; for they live to him, and "to them to live is Christ," Phil. i. 21. The duties of religion are in the world, like fatherless children, in rags; some will not take them in, because they never loved them nor their Father; some take them in, because they may be serviceable to them: but the saints take them in for their Father's sake, that is for Christ's sake: and they are lovely in their eyes, because they are like him. O! whence is this new life of the saints? Surely it could never have been hammered out of the natural powers of their souls, by the united force of all created power. In eternal barrenness would they have continued; but that being "married to Christ, they bring forth fruit unto God," Rom. vii. 4.

If you ask me, "How can your nourishment, growth, and fruitfulness be forwarded?" I offer these few advices: 1. Make sure work, as to your knitting with the stock by faith unfeigned; and beware of hypocrisy: a branch that is not sound at the heart will certainly wither. The trees of the Lord's planting are trees of righteousness, Isa. lxi. 3. So, when others fade, they bring forth fruit. Hypocrisy is a disease in the vitals of religion, which will consume all at length. It is a leak in the ship, that will certainly sink it. Sincerity of grace will make it lasting, be it ever so weak; as the smallest twig, that is sound at the heart, will draw nourishment from the stock and grow; while the greatest bough that is rotten can never recover, because it receives no nourishment. 2. Labour to be stedfast in the truths and way of God. An unsettled and wavering judgment is a great enemy to Christian growth and fruitfulness, as the apostle teaches, Eph. iv. 14, 15, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." A rolling stone gathers no moss, and a wavering judgment makes a fruitless life. Though a tree be never so sound, yet how can it grow, or be fruitful, if you be still removing it out of one soil into another? 3. Endeavour to cut off the suckers, as gardeners do, that their trees may thrive. These are unmortified lusts; therefore "mortify your members that are upon the earth," Col. iii. 5. When the Israelites got meat to their lusts, they got leanness to their souls. She that has many hungry children about her hand, and must be still putting into their mouths, will have much ado to get a bit put into her own. They must refuse the cravings of inordinate affections, who would have their souls to prosper. 4. Improve, for these ends, the ordinances of God. It is in the courts of our God where the trees of righteousness flourish, Psalm xcii. 13. The waters of the sanctuary

are the means appointed of God, to cause his people to grow as willows by the water courses. Therefore drink in with "desire, the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby," 1 Pet. ii. 2. Come to these wells of salvation: not to look at them only, but to draw water out of them. The sacrament of the Lord's supper is in a special manner appointed for these ends. It is not only a solemn public profession, and a seal of our union and communion with Christ; but it is a means of most intimate communion with him; and strengthens our union with him, our faith, love, repentance, and other graces, 1 Cor. x. 16, "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, it is not the communion of the body of Christ?" And chap. xii. 13, "We have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Give yourselves unto prayer; open your mouths wide, and he will fill them.—By these means the branches in Christ may be farther nourished, grow up, and bring forth much fruit.

A seventh benefit is, The acceptance of their fruits of holiness before the Lord. Though they may be very imperfect, they are accepted, because they savour of Christ the blessed stock, which the branches grow upon; while the fruits of others are rejected of God, Gen. iv. 4, 5, "And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and his offering; but unto Cain and his offering he had no respect." Compare Heb. xi. 3, "By faith, Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." O how defective are the saints' duties in the eye of the law! The believer himself sees many faults in his best performances; yet the Lord graciously receives them.—There is no grace planted in the heart, but there is a weed of corruption hard by its side, while the saints are in the lower world. Their very sincerity is not without a mixture of dissimulation or hypocrisy, Gal. ii. 13. Hence there are defects in the exercise of every grace; in the performance of every duty; depraved nature always drops something to stain their best works. There is still a mixture of darkness with their clearest light. Yet this does not mar their acceptance, Cant. vi. 10, "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning?" or, as the dawning? Behold how Christ's spouse is esteemed and accepted of her Lord, even when she looks forth as the morning, whose beauty is mixed with the blackness of the night! "When the morning was looking out," as the word is Jud. xix. 26, that is, "In the dawning of the day," as we read it. So the very dawning of grace, and good will to Christ, grace peeping out from under a mass of darkness in believers, is pleasant and acceptable to him, as the break of day is to the weary traveller.—Though the remains of unbelief make the hand of faith to shake and tremble; yet the

Lord is so well pleased with it, that he employs it to carry away pardons and supplies of grace, from the throne of grace, and the fountain of grace. His faith was effectual, "who "cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!" Mark ix. 24. Though the remains of sensual affections make the flame of their love weak and smoky; he turns his eyes from the smoke, and beholds the flame, how fair it is, Cant. iv. 10, "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse!"—"The smell of their" under "garment" of inherent holiness, as imperfect as it is, "is like the smell of Lebanon," ver. 11; and that because they are covered with their elder brother's clothes, which makes the sons of God to "smell as a field which the Lord hath blessed." Their good works are accepted: their cups of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not want a reward. Though they cannot offer for the tabernacle, gold, silver, and brass, and onyx stones, let them come forward with what they have; if it were but goats' hair, it shall not be rejected; if it were but ram's skins, they shall be kindly accepted; for they are dyed red, dipt by faith in the Mediator's blood, and so presented unto God. A very ordinary work done in faith, and from faith, if it were but the building of a wall about the holy city, is a great work, Neh. vi. 3. If it were but the bestowing of a box of ointment on Christ, it shall never be forgotten, Matt. xxvi. 13. Even "a cup of cold water only given to one of Christ's little ones, in the name of a disciple, shall be rewarded," Matt. x. 42. Nay, not a good word for Christ shall drop from their mouths, but it shall be registered in God's "book of remembrance," Mal. iii. 16. Nor shall a tear drop from their eyes for him, but he will "put it in his bottle," Psalm lvi. 8. Their will is accepted for the deed; their sorrow for the want of will, for the will itself, 2 Cor. viii. 12, "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." Their groanings, when they cannot well express their desires, are heard in heaven; the meaning of those groans is well known there, and they will be returned like the dove with an olive branch of peace in her mouth. See Rom. viii. 26, 27. Their mites are better than other men's talents. Their lisping and broken sentences are more pleasant to their Father in heaven, than the most fluent or flourishing speeches of those who are not in Christ. Their voice is sweet, even when they are ashamed it should be heard; their countenance is comely, even when they blush, and draw a veil over it, Cant. ii. 14. The Mediator takes their petitions, blots out some parts, rectifies others, and then presents them to the Father, in consequence whereof they pass in the court of heaven.

Every true Christian is a temple to God. If you look for sacrifices, they are not wanting there; they offer the sacrifice of praise, and do good: with such sacrifices God is well pleased, Heb. xiii. 15, 16. Christ himself is the altar that sanctifies the gift, ver. 10. If we look for incense, it is there too. The graces of the Spirit are found in their hearts: and the Spirit of the crucified Christ fires them, and puts them in exercise; as the fire was brought from the altar of burnt-offering, to set the incense in flame: then they mount heavenward, like pillars of smoke, Cant. iii. 6. But the best of incense will leave ashes behind it: yes, indeed; but as the priest took away the ashes of the incense in a golden dish, and threw them out; so our great High Priest takes away the ashes and refuse of all the saint's services, by his mediation in their behalf.

An eighth benefit flowing from union with Christ, is establishment. The Christian cannot fall away, but must persevere unto the end, John x. 28, "they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Indeed, if a branch do not knit with the stock, it will fall away when shaking winds arise: but the branch knit to the stock stands fast whatever wind blows. Sometimes a stormy wind of temptation blows from hell, and shakes the branches in Christ the true vine: but their union with him is their security; moved they may be, but removed they never can be.—The Lord "will with the temptation also make a way of escape," 1 Cor. x. 13. Calms are never of any continuance; there is almost always some wind blowing; and therefore branches are rarely altogether at rest. But sometimes violent winds arise, which threaten to rend them from off their stock. Even so it is with saints; they are daily put to it to keep their ground against temptation: sometimes the wind from hell rises so high, and blows so furiously, that it makes even top branches to sweep the ground; yet being knit to Christ their stock, they get up again, in spite of the most violent efforts of the prince of the power of the air, Psalm xciv. 18, "When I said, my foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." But the Christian improves by his trial; and is so far from being damaged, that he is benefited by it, as it discovers what hold the soul has of Christ, and what hold Christ has of the soul. And look, as the wind in the bellows, which would blow out the candle, blows up the fire; even so it often comes to pass, that such temptations enliven the true Christian, awakening the graces of the Spirit in him; and by that means, discover both the reality and the strength of grace in him. And hence, as Luther, that great man of God, saith, "One Christian, who hath had experience of temptation, is worth a thousand others."

Sometimes a stormy wind of trouble and persecution from the men of the world, blows upon the vine, that is, mystical Christ; but union with the stock is a sufficient security to the branches. In a time of the church's peace and outward prosperity, while the angels hold the winds that they blow not, there are a great many branches taken up and put into the stock, which never knit with it, nor live by it, though they be bound up with it by the bonds of external ordinances. Now, these may stand a while on the stock, and stand with great ease while the calm lasts; but when once the storms arise, and the winds blow, they will begin to fall off one after another; and the higher the wind rises, the greater will the number be that falls. Yea, some strong boughs of that sort, when they fall, will, by their weight, carry others of their own kind, quite down to the earth with them; and will bruise and press down some true branches in such a manner, that they would also fall off, were it not for that fast hold which the stock has of them. Then it is that many branches which before were high and eminent, are found lying on the earth withered, and fit to be gathered up and cast into the fire, Matt. xiii. 6, "When the sun was up, they were scorched: and because they had no root, they withered away." John xv. 6, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." But however violently the winds blow, none of the truly ingrafted branches that are knit with the stock are found missing, when the storm is changed into a calm, John xvii. 12, "Those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost." The least twig growing in Christ shall stand it out, and subsist; when the tallest cedars growing on their own root, shall be laid flat on the ground, Rom. viii. 35, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" See ver. 36—39. However severely Israel be "sifted, yet shall not the least grain," or, as it is in the original language, a little stone, "fall upon the earth," Amos ix. 9. It is an allusion to the sifting of fine pebble stones from among heaps of dust and sand: though the sand and dust fall to the ground be blown away with the wind, and trampled under foot; yet there shall not fall on the earth so much as a little stone, such is the exactness of the seive, and the care of the sifter.—There is nothing more ready to fall on the earth than a stone: yet, if professors of religion be lively stones, built on Christ the chief corner-stone, although they be little stones, they shall not fall to the earth, whatever storm beats upon them. See 1 Pet. ii. 4—6. All the good grain in the church of Christ is of this kind: they are stones, in respect of solidity;

and lively stones in respect of activity. If men be solid substantial Christians, they will not be like chaff tossed to and fro with every wind; having so much of the liveliness, that they have nothing of the stone: and if they be lively Christians, whose spirits will stir in them, as Paul's did, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry, Acts xvii. 16, they will not lie like stones, to be turned over, hither and thither, cut and carved, according to the lusts of men; having so much of the stone, as leaves nothing of liveliness in them.

Our God's house is a great house, wherein are not only vessels of gold, but also of earth, 2 Tim. ii. 20.—Both these are apt to contract filthiness; and therefore when God brings trouble upon the church, he hath an eye to both. As for the vessels of gold, they are not destroyed; but purified by a fiery trial in the furnace of affliction, as goldsmiths refine their gold, Isa. i. 25, "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross." But destruction is to the vessels of earth; they shall be broken in shivers, as a potter's vessel, ver. 28, "And the destruction," or breaking "of the transgressors, and of the sinners, shall be together." It seems to be an allusion to that law, for breaking the vessels of earth, when unclean; while vessels of wood, and consequently vessels of gold, were only to be rinsed, Lev. xv. 12.

A ninth benefit is support. If thou be a branch ingrafted in Christ, the root beareth thee. The believer leans on Christ, as a weak woman in a journey leaning upon her beloved husband, Cant. viii. 5. He stays himself upon him, as a feeble old man stays himself on his staff, Isa. l. 10. He rolls himself on him, as one rolls a burden he is not able to walk under, off his own back, upon another who is able to bear it, Psal. xxii. 8, marg. There are many weights to hang upon and press down the branches in Christ the true vine. But you know, whatever weights hang on the branches, the stock bears all; it bears the branch, and the weight that is upon it too.

1. Christ supports believers in him, under a weight of outward troubles. That is a large promise, Isa. xliii. 2, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee: and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee." See how David was supported under a heavy load, 1 Sam. xxx. 6. His city Ziglag was burnt, his wives were taken captives, his men spoke of stoning him: nothing was left him but his God and his faith; but by his faith, he encouraged himself in his God. The Lord comes, and lays his cross on his people's shoulders; it presses them down, and they are likely to sink under it, and therefore cry, "Master, save us, we perish;" but he supports them under their burden; he bears them up, and they bear their cross. Thus the Christian, with a weight of outward

troubles upon him, goes lightly under his burden, having the everlasting arms underneath him. The Christian has a spring of comfort, which he cannot lose; and therefore never wants something to support him. If a man have all his riches in money, robbers may take these away; and then what has he more? But though the landed proprietor may be robbed of his money, yet his lands remain for his support. Those who build their comfort on worldly goods, may quickly be comfortless; but those who are united to Christ shall find comfort, when all the streams of worldly enjoyments are dried up, Job vi. 13, "Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?" that is, Though my substance is gone; though my servants, my children, my health, and soundness of body, are all gone; yet my grace is not gone too. Though the Sabeans have driven away my oxen and asses, and the Chaldeans have driven away my camels; they have not driven away my faith, and my hope too: these are yet in me; they are not driven from me; so that by them I can fetch comfort from heaven, when I can have none from earth.

2. Christ supports his people under a weight of inward troubles and discouragements. Many times "heart and flesh fail them;" but then "God is the strength of their heart," Psalm lxxxiii. 26. They may have a weight of guilt pressing them. This is a load that will make their backs bend, and their spirits sink: but he takes it off, and puts a pardon into their hand, while they cast their burden upon him. Christ takes the soul, as one marries a widow under a burden of debt: and so when the creditors come to Christ's spouse, she carries them to her husband, confesses the debt, declares she is not able to pay, and lays all upon him. The Christian sometimes, through carelessness, losses his discharge; he cannot find it, however he search for it. The law takes that opportunity, and proceeds against him for a debt paid already. God hides his face, and the soul is distressed. Many arrows go through the heart now; many long accounts are laid before the man, which he reads and acknowledges. Often does he see the officers coming to apprehend him, and the prison door open to receive him. What else keeps him from sinking utterly under discouragements in this case, but the everlasting arms of a Mediator underneath him, and that he relies upon the great Surety. Farther, they may have a weight of strong lusts pressing them. They have a body of death upon them. Death is a weight that presses the soul out of the body. A leg or an arm of death, if I may so speak, would be a terrible load. One lively lust will sometimes lie so heavy on a child of God, that he can no more remove it than a child could throw a giant from

off him. How then are they supported under a whole body of death? Their support is from that root which bears them, from the everlasting arm that is underneath them. "His grace is sufficient for them," 2 Cor. xii. 9. The great stay of the believer is not the grace of God within him; that is a well whose streams sometimes run dry: but it is the grace of God without him, the grace that is in Jesus Christ; which is an ever-flowing fountain, to which the believer can never come amiss. For the apostle tells us in the same verse, it is "the power of Christ." "Most gladly therefore," saith he, "will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me," or "tabernacle above me," as the cloud of glory did on the Israelites, which God spread for a covering, or shelter, to them in the wilderness, Psalm xv. 39; compare Isa. iv. 5, 6. So that the believer in this combat, like the eagle, first flies aloft by faith, and then comes down on the prey, Psalm xxxiv. 5, "They looked to him, and were lightened." Finally, they have a weight of weakness and wants upon them, but they "cast over that burden on the Lord," their strength, "and he sustains them," Psalm lv. 22. With all their wants and weakness they are cast upon him; as the poor, weak, and naked babe coming out of the womb, is cast into the lap of one appointed to take care of it, Psalm xxii. 10. Though they be destitute, as a shrub in the wilderness, which the foot of every beast may tread down, the Lord will regard them, Psalm cii. 17. It is not surprising that the weakest plant should be safe in a garden: but our Lord Jesus Christ is a hedge for protection to his weak and destitute ones, even in a wilderness.

Objection. "But if the saints be so supported, how is it that they fall so often under temptation and discouragements? *Answer.* 1. How low soever they fall at any time they never fall off; and that is a great matter. They "are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," 1 Pet. i. 5. Hypocrites may fall, so as to fall off, and fall into the pit, as a bucket falls into a well when the chain breaks. But, though the child of God may fall, and that so low that the waters go over his head, yet there is still a bond of union between Christ and him; the chain is not broken; he will not go to the ground; he will be drawn up again, Luke xxii. 31, 32, "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." 2. The falls of the saints flow from their not improving their union with Christ, their not making use of him by faith, for staying or bearing them up, Psalm xxvii. 13, "I had fainted, unless I had believed." While the nurse holds the child in her arms, it cannot fall to the ground; yet if the unwary child hold

not by her, it may fall backwards in her arms, to its great hurt. Thus David's fall broke his bones, Psalm ii. 8; but it did not break the bond of union between Christ and him; the Holy Spirit, the bond of that union, was not taken from him, ver. 11.

The last benefit I shall name, is, the special care of the Husbandman, John xvi. 1, 2, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Believers, by virtue of their union with Christ, are the objects of God's special care and providence. Mystical Christ is God's vine; other societies in the world are but wild olive trees. The men of the world are but God's out-field; the saints are his vineyard, which he has a special propriety in, and a special concern for, Cant. viii. 12, "My vineyard, which is mine, is before me." He that slumbers not nor sleeps, is the keeper of it; he does keep it; lest any hurt it, he will keep it night and day; he, in whose hand is the dew of heaven, will water it every moment, Isa. xxvii. 3. He dresses and weeds it, in order to further its fruitfulness, John xv. 2. He cuts off the luxuriant twigs, that mar the fruitfulness of the branch. This is done, especially by the word, and by cross or afflictions; the saints need the ministry of the word, as much as the vineyard needeth one to dress and prune the vines, 1 Cor. iii. 9, "We are labourers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." And they need the cross too, 1 Pet. i. 6.

Therefore, if we were to reckon the cross amongst the benefits flowing to believers from their union with Christ, I judge that we should not reckon amiss. Sure I am, in their sufferings, they "suffer with him," Rom. viii. 17. The assurances which they have of the cross, have rather the nature of a promise, than of a threatening, Psalm lxxxix. 30—33, "If his children forsake my law—then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." This looks like a tutor's engaging to a dying father, to take care of the children left with him; and to give them both nurture and admonition for their good. The covenant of grace truly beats the spears of affliction into pruning-hooks, to them that are in Christ, Isa. xxviii. 9, "By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin." Why then should we be angry with our cross? why should we be frightened at it? The believer must take up his cross, and follow his leader, the Lord Jesus Christ. He must take up his every-day's cross, Luke ix. 23, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up

his cross daily:" Yea, he must take up holy day's cross too, Lam. ii. 22, "Thou hast called, as in a solemn day, my terrors round about." The church of the Jews had of a long time many a pleasant meeting at the temple, on solemn days, for the worship of God; but they got a solemnity of another nature, when God called together, about the temple and city, the Chaldean army, that burnt the temple, and laid Jerusalem on heaps. And as the church of God is yet militant in this lower region, how can it be but the clouds will return after the rain? But the cross of Christ, by which appellation the saint's troubles are named, is a kindly name to the believer. —It is a cross indeed; not to the believer's graces, but to his corruptions. The hypocrite's seeming grace may indeed breathe out their last on a cross, as those of the stony-ground hearers did, Matt. xiii. 6, "When the sun" of persecution, ver. 21, "was up, they were scorched; and because they had not root, they withered away;" but never did one of the real graces in a believer die upon the cross yet. Nay, as the candle shines brightest in the night, and the fire burns fiercest in intense frost; so the believers graces are commonly most vigorous in a time of trouble.

There is a certain pleasure and sweetness in the cross, to those who have their senses exercised to discern, and to find it out. There is a certain sweetness in a man's seeing himself upon his trial for heaven, and standing candidate for glory. There is a pleasure in travelling over those mountains, where the Christian can see the prints of Christ's own feet, and the footsteps of the flock, who have been there before him. How pleasant is it to a saint, in the exercise of grace, to see how a good God crosses his corrupt inclinations, and prevents his folly! How sweet is it to behold these thieves upon the cross! How refined a pleasure is there in observing how God draws away provision from unruly lusts, and so pinches them, that the Christian may get them governed! Of a truth, there is a paradise within this thorn-hedge. Many a time the people of God are in bonds; which are never loosed, till they are bound with cords of affliction. God takes them, and throws them into a fiery furnace, that burns off their bonds; and then, like the three children, Dan. iii. 25, they are "loose, walking in the midst of the fire." God gives his children a potion, with one bitter ingredient: if they will not work upon them, he will put in a second, a third, and so on, as there is need, that they may work together for their good, Rom. viii. 28. With cross winds he hastens them to their labour. They are often found in such ways, as that the cross is the happiest thing that they can meet with: and well may they salute it as David did Abigail, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

which sent thee this day to meet me," 1 Sam. xxv. 32. Worldly things are often such a load to the Christian, that he moves but very slowly heavenward. God sends a wind of trouble, that blows the burden off the man's back; he then walks more speedily on his way; after God has drawn some gilded earth from him, that was drawing his heart away from God, Zeph. iii. 12, "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." It was an observation of a heathen moralist, that "no history makes mention of any man, who hath been made better by riches." I doubt whether our modern histories can supply the defect of ancient histories in this point. But sure I am, many have been the worse for riches: thousands have been hugged to death in the embraces of a smiling world; and many good men have got wounds from outward prosperity, that must be cured by the cross. I remember to have read of one, who having an imposthume in his breast, had in vain used the help of physicians: but being wounded with a sword, the imposthume broke; and his life was saved by that accident, which threatened immediate death. Often hath spiritual imposthumes gathered in the breasts of God's people, in time of outward prosperity, and been thus broken and dispersed by the cross. It is kindly for believers to be healed by stripes; although they are usually so weak as to cry out for fear, at the sight of the pruning-hook, as if it were the destroying axe; and to think that the Lord is coming to kill them, when he is indeed coming to cure them.

I shall now conclude, addressing myself in a few words, first, to saints, and next to sinners.

To you that are saints, I say,

First, strive to obtain and keep up actual communion and fellowship with Jesus Christ; that is, to be still deriving fresh supplies of grace, from the fountain thereof in him, by faith: and making suitable returns of them, in the exercise of grace and holy obedience. Beware of estrangement between Christ and your souls. If it has got in already, which seems to be the case of many this day, endeavour to get it removed. There are multitudes in the world who slight Christ, though you should not slight him: many that looked fair for heaven, have turned their backs upon him. The warm sun of outward peace and prosperity, has caused some to cast their cloak of religion from them, who held it fast when the wind of trouble was blowing upon them: and "Will you also go away?" John vi. 67. The basest ingratitude is stamped on your slighting communion with Christ, Jer. ii. 31, "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel, a land of darkness? Wherefore say my people, We are lords, we will come

no more unto thee?"—Oh! beloved, "Is this your kindness to your friend?" It is unbecoming any wife to slight converse with her husband, but her especially who was taken from a prison or a dunghill, as you were, by your Lord. It is not a time for you to be out of your chambers, Isa. xxvi. 20. They that now are walking most closely with God, may have enough to do to stand when the trial comes: how hard will it be for others then, who are like to be surprised with troubles, when guilt is lying on their consciences unremoved! To be awakened out of a sound sleep, and cast into a raging sea, as Jonah was, will be a fearful trial. To feel trouble before we see it coming, to be past hope before we have any fear, is a very sad case. Wherefore break down your idols of jealousy, mortify those lusts, those irregular appetites and desires, that have stolen away your hearts, and left you like Samson without his hair, and say, "I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now," Hos. ii. 7.

Secondly, Walk as becomes those that are united to Christ. Prove your union with him by "walking as he also walked," 1 John ii. 6. If you are brought from under the power of darkness, let your light shine before men. "Shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life;" as the lantern holds the candle, which being in it, shines through it, Phil. ii. 15, 16. Now that you profess Christ to be in you, let his image shine forth in your conversation, and remember that the business of your lives is to prove, by practical arguments, what you profess.

1. You know the character of a wife: "She that is married, careth how she may please her husband."—Go you, and do likewise; "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing," Col. i. 10. This is the great business of life; you must please him, though it should displease all the world. What he hates must be hateful to you, because he hates it. Whatever lusts come to gain your hearts, deny them, seeing the grace of God has appeared, teaching us so to do, and you are joined to the Lord.—Let him be a covering to your eyes; for you have not your choice to make, it is made already; and you must not dishonour your head. A man takes care of his feet, because, if he catch cold there, it flies up to his head.—"Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid," says the apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 14. Wilt thou take that heart of thine, which is Christ's dwelling-place, and lodge his enemies there? Wilt thou take that body, which is his temple and defile it, by using the members thereof as instruments of sin?

2. Be careful to bring forth fruit, and much fruit. The branch well laden with fruit, is the glory of the vine, and of the husbandman

too, John xv. 8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." A barren tree stands safer in a wood, than in an orchard; and branches in Christ, that bring not forth fruit will be taken away, and cast into the fire.

3. Be heavenly-minded, and maintain a holy contempt of the world. You are united to Christ; he is your head and husband, and is in heaven; wherefore your hearts should be there also. Col. iii. 1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Let the serpent's seed go on their belly, and eat the dust of this earth: but let the members of Christ be ashamed to bow down, and feed with them.

4. Live and act dependently, depending by faith on Jesus Christ. That which grows on its own root, is a tree, not a branch. It is of the nature of a branch, to depend on the stock for all, and to derive all its sap from thence. Depend on him for life, light, strength, and all spiritual benefits, Gal. ii. 20, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I live now in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." For this cause, in the mystical union, strength is united to weakness, that death and earth may mount up on borrowed wings. Depend on him for temporal benefits also; Matt. vi. 11, "Give us this day our daily bread." If we have trusted him with our eternal concerns, let us be ashamed to distrust him in the matter of our provision in the world.

5. Be of a meek disposition, and a uniting temper with the fellow members of Christ's body, as being united to the meek Jesus, the blessed centre of union.—There is a prophecy to this purpose concerning the kingdom of Christ, Isa. xi. 6, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid." It is an allusion to the beast's in Noah's ark. The beasts of prey that were wont to kill and devour others, when once they came into the ark, lay down in peace with them: the lamb was in no hazard from the wolf there, nor the kid from the leopard. There was a beautiful accomplishment of it in the primitive church, Acts iv. 32, "And the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and of one soul." And this prevails in all the members of Christ, according to the measure of the grace of God in them. Man is born naked: he comes naked into this world, as if God designed him for the picture of peace; and surely, when he is born again, he comes not into the new world of grace with claws to tear, a sword to wound, and a fire in his hand to burn up his fellow-members in Christ, because they cannot see with his light. Oh! it is sad to see Christ's lilies as thorns in one another's sides, Christ's lambs devouring one another

like lions, and God's diamonds cutting one another: yet it must be remembered, that sin is no proper cement for the members of Christ, though Herod and Pontius Pilate may be made friends that way. The apostle's rule is plain, Heb. xii. 14, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness." To follow peace no farther than our humour, credit, and such like things will allow us, is too short: to pursue it farther than holiness allows us, that is, conformity to the Divine will, is too far. Peace is precious, yet it may be bought too dearly: wherefore we must rather want it, than purchase it at any expense of truth or holiness. But otherwise it cannot be bought too dearly; and it will always be precious in the eyes of the sons of peace.

And now, sinners, what shall I say to you? I have given you some view of the privileges of those in the state of grace. You have seen them afar off; but alas! they are not yours, because you are not Christ's. The sinfulness of an unregenerate state is yours; and the misery of it is yours also: you have neither part nor lot in this matter. The guilt of all your sins lies upon you; you have no part in the righteousness of Christ. There is no peace to you, no peace with God, no true peace of conscience; for you have no saving interest in the great peace-maker. You are none of God's family; the adoption we spoke of, belongs not to you. You have no part in the Spirit of sanctification; and, in one word, you have no inheritance among them that are sanctified. All I can say to you in this matter, is, that the case is not desperate, they may yet be yours, Rev. iii. 20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Heaven is proposing a union with earth still; the potter is making suit to his own clay; and the gates of the city of refuge are not yet closed. O that we could compel you to come in! Thus far of the state of grace.

STATE IV.

THE ETERNAL STATE.

PART I.

DEATH.

JOB, **chap. xxx. ver. 23.**

For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.

I COME now to discourse of **man's eternal state, into which he enters** by death. Of this entrance, **Job takes a solemn serious view, in** the words of the text, which **contain a general truth, and a particular** application of it. The **general truth is supposed; namely, that** all men must, by death, **remove out of this world; they must die.** But whither must they go? **They must go to the house appointed** for all living; to the grave, **that darksome, gloomy, solitary house,** in the land of forgetfulness. **Wherever the body is laid up till the** resurrection, thither, as to **a dwelling-house, death brings us home.** While we are in the body, **we are but in a lodging-house, in an inn,** on our way homeward. **When we come to our grave, we come to** our home, our long home, Eccl. xii. 5. **All living must be inhabitants** of this house, good and **bad, old and young. Man's life is a** stream, running into death's **devouring deeps. They who now live** in palaces, must quit them, **and go home to this house; and they** who have not where to lay **their heads, shall thus have a house at** length. It is appointed **for all, by Him whose counsel shall stand.** This appointment cannot be **shifted; it is a law which mortals cannot** transgress. Job's application **of this general truth to himself, is** expressed in these words; **"I know that thou wilt bring me to** death," &c. He knew, that **he must meet with death; that his soul** and body must needs part; **that God, who had set the time, would** certainly see it kept. Sometimes Job was inviting death to come to him, and carry him home to its house; **yea, he was in the hazard**

of running to it before the time: Job vii. 15, "My soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life." But here he considers God would bring him to it; yea, bring him back to it, as the word imports. Whereby he seems to intimate, that we have no life in this world, but as runaways from death, which stretches out its cold arms, to receive us from the womb: but though we do then narrowly escape its clutches, we cannot escape long; we shall be brought back again to it. Job knew this, he had laid it down as a certainty, and was looking for it.

Doctrine, All must die.—Although this doctrine be confirmed by the experience of all former generations, ever since Abel entered into the house appointed for all living, and though the living know that they shall die, yet it is needful to discourse of the certainty of death, that it may be impressed on the mind, and duly considered.

Wherefore consider, 1. There is an unalterable statute of death," under which men are concluded. "It is appointed unto men once to die," Heb. ix. 27. It is laid up for them, as parents lay up for their children: they may look for it, and cannot miss it; seeing God has designed and reserved it for them. There is no peradventure in it; "we must needs die," 2 Sam. xiv. 14. Though some men will not hear of death, yet every man must needs see death, Psalm lxxxix. 48. Death is a champion all must grapple with: we must enter the lists with it, and it will have the mastery, Eccl. viii. 8, "There is no man that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death." They indeed who are found alive at Christ's coming, shall all be changed, 1 Cor. xv. 51. But that change will be equivalent to death, will answer the purposes of it. All other persons must go the common road, the way of all flesh. 2. Let us consult daily observation. Every man "seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and brutish person," Psalm xlix. 10. There is room enough on this earth for us, notwithstanding the multitudes that were upon it before us. They are gone, to make room for us; as we must depart, to make room for others. It is long since death began to transport men into another world, and vast multitudes are gone thither already: yet the work is going on still; death is carrying off new inhabitants daily, to the house appointed for all living. Who could ever hear the grave say, It is enough! Long has it been getting, but still it asketh. This world is like a great fair or market, where some are coming in, others going out; while the assembly that is in it is confusion, and the most part know not wherefore they are come together; or, like a town situated on the road to a great city, through which some travellers have passed, some are passing, while others are only com-

ing in, Eccl. i. 4, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever." Death is an inexorable, irresistable messenger, who cannot be diverted from executing his orders by the force of the mighty, the bribes of the rich, or the entreaties of the poor. It does not reverence the hoary head, nor pity the harmless babe. The bold and daring cannot outbrave it; nor can the faint-hearted obtain a discharge in this war. 3. The human body consists of perishing materials, Gen. iii. 19, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." The strongest are but brittle earthen vessels, easily broken in shivers. The soul is but meanly housed while in this mortal body, which is not a house of stone, but a house of clay, the mud walls cannot but moulder away; especially seeing the foundation is not on a rock, but in the dust; they are crushed before the moth, though this insect be so tender that the gentle touch of a finger will despatch it, Job iv. 19. These principles are like gunpowder; a very small spark lighting on them will set them on fire, and blow up the house: the stone of a raisin, or a hair in milk, having choked men, and laid the house of clay in the dust. If we consider the frame and structure of our bodies, how fearfully and wonderfully we are made; and on how regular and exact a motion of the fluids, and balance of humours, our life depends; and that death has as many doors to enter in by, as the body has pores; and if we compare the soul and body together, we may justly reckon, that there is somewhat more astonishing in our life, than in our death; and that it is more strange to see dust walking up and down on the dust, than lying down in it. Though the lamp of our life be not violently blown out, yet the flame must go out at length for want of oil. What are those distempers and diseases which we are liable to, but death's harbingers, that come to prepare his way? They meet us, as soon as we set our foot on earth, to tell us at our entry, that we do but come into the world to go out again. Nevertheless, some are snatched away in a moment, without being warned by sickness or disease. 4. We have sinful souls, and therefore have dying bodies: death follows sin, as the shadow follows the body. The wicked must die, by virtue of the threatening of the covenant of works, Gen. ii. 17, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." And the godly must die too, that as death entered by sin, sin may go out by death. Christ has taken away the sting of death, as to them; though he has not as yet removed death itself. Wherefore, though it fasten on them, as the viper did on Paul's hand, it shall do them no harm: but because the leprosy of sin is in the walls of the house, it must be broken down, and all the materials thereof carried forth. 5. Man's

life in this world, according to the Scripture account of it, is but a few degrees removed from death. The Scripture represents it as a vain and empty thing, short in its continuance, and swift in its passing away.

First, Man's life is a vain and empty thing: while it is, it vanishes away; and, lo! it is not. Job vii. 16, "My days are vanity." If we suspect afflicted Job of partiality in this matter, hear the wise and prosperous Solomon's character of the days of his life, Eccl. vii. 15, "All things have I seen in the days of my vanity," that is, my vain days. Moses, who was a very active man, compares our days to a sleep, Psalm xc. 5, "They are as a sleep," which is not noticed till it is ended. The resemblance is just: few men have right apprehensions of life, until death awaken them; then we begin to know that we were living. "We spend our years as a tale that is told," ver. 9. When an idle tale is telling it may affect a little; but when it is ended, it is remembered no more: and so is a man forgotten, when the fable of his life is ended. It is as a dream, or vision of the night, in which there is nothing solid; when one awakes, all vanishes; Job xx. 8, "He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found; yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night." It is but a vain shew or image; Psalm xxxix. 6, "Surely every man walketh in a vain shew." Man, in this world, is but as it were a walking statue: his life is but an image of life, there is so much of death in it.

If we look on our life, in the several periods of it, we shall find it a heap of vanities. "Childhood and youth are vanity," Eccl. xi. 10. We come into the world the most helpless of all animals: young birds and beasts can do something for themselves, but infant man is altogether unable to help himself. Our childhood is spent in pitiful trifling pleasures, which become the scorn of our after thoughts. Youth is a flower that soon withereth, a blossom that quickly falls off; it is a space of time in which we are rash, foolish, and inconsiderate, pleasing ourselves with a variety of vanities, and swimming as it were through a flood of them. But ere we are aware it is past; and we are, in middle age, encompassed with a thick cloud of cares, through which we must grope; and finding ourselves beset with pricking thorns of difficulties, through them we must force our way, to accomplish the projects and contrivances of our riper thoughts. The more we solace ourselves in any earthly enjoyment we attain to, the more bitterness do we find in parting with it. Then comes old age, attended with its own train of infirmities, labour, and sorrow, Psalm xc. 10, and sets us down next door to the grave. In a word, "All

flesh is like grass," Isa. xl. 6. Every stage or period in life, is vanity. "Man at his best state," his middle age, when the heat of youth is spent, and the sorrows of old age have not yet overtaken him, "is altogether vanity," Psalm xxxix. 5.—Death carries off some in the bud of childhood, others in the blossom of youth, and others when they are come to their fruit; few are left standing, till, like ripe corn, they forsake the ground; all die one time or other.

Secondly, Man's life is a short thing; it is not only a vanity, but a short-lived vanity. Consider, 1 How the life of man is reckoned in the Scriptures. It was indeed sometimes reckoned by hundreds of years: but no man ever arrived at a thousand, which yet bears no proportion to eternity. Now hundreds are brought down to scores; threescore and ten, or fourscore, is its utmost length, Psalm. xc. 10. But few men arrive at that length of life. Death does but rarely wait, till men be bowing down, by reason of age, to meet the grave. Yet, as if years were too big a word for such a small thing as the life of man on earth, we find it counted by months, Job xiv. 5, "The number of his months are with thee." Our course, like that of the moon, is run in a little time: we are always waxing or waning, till we disappear.—But frequently it is reckoned by days; and these but few, Job xiv. 1, "Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days." Nay, it is but one day, in Scripture account; and that a hireling's day, who will precisely observe when his day ends, and give over his work, ver. 6, "Till he shall accomplish as an hireling his day."—Yea, the Scripture brings it down to the shortest space of time, and calls it a moment, 2 Cor. iv. 17, "Our light affliction," though it last all our life long, "is but for a moment." Elsewhere it is brought down yet to a lower pitch, farther than which one cannot carry it, Psalm xxxix. 5, "Mine age is as nothing before thee." Agreeably to this, Solomon tells, Eccl. iii. 2, "There is a time to be born, and a time to die;" but makes no mention of a time to live, as if our life were but a skip from the womb to the grave. 2. Consider the various similitudes by which the Scripture represents the shortness of man's life. Hear Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 12, "Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent; I have cut off like a weaver my life." The shepherd's tent is soon removed; for the flocks must not feed long in one place; such is a man's life on this earth, quickly gone. It is a web which he is incessantly working; he is not idle so much as for one moment: in a short time it is wrought, and then it is cut off. Every breathing is a thread in this web; when the last breath is drawn, the web is woven out; he expires, and then it is cut off, he

breathes no more. Man is like grass, and like a flower, Isa. xl. 6. "All flesh," even the strongest and most healthy flesh, "is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field." The grass is flourishing in the morning; but, being cut down by the mowers, in the evening it is withered: so man sometimes is walking up and down at ease in the morning, and in the evening is lying a corpse, being struck down by a sudden blow, with one or other of death's weapons. The flower, at best, is but a weak and tender thing, of short continuance wherever it grows: but observe, man is not compared to the flower of the garden; but to the flower of the field, which the foot of every beast may tread down at any time. Thus is our life liable to a thousand accidents every day, any of which may cut us off. But though we should escape all these, yet at length this grass withereth, this flower fadeth of itself. It is carried off "as the cloud is consumed, and vanisheth away," Job vii. 9. It looks big as the morning cloud, which promises great things, and raises the expectation of the husbandman; but the sun riseth, and the cloud is scattered; death comes, and man vanisheth. —The apostle James proposes the question, "What is your life?" chapter iv. 14. Hear his answer, "It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." It is frail, uncertain, and lasteth not. It is as smoke, which goes out of the chimney, as if it would darken the face of the heavens; but quickly it is scattered, and appears no more: thus goeth man's life, and "where is he?" It is wind, Job vii. 7, "O remember that my life is wind." It is but a passing blast, a short puff, "a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again," Psalm lxxviii. 38. Our breath is in our nostrils, as if it were always upon the wing to depart; ever passing and repassing, like a traveller, until it go away, not to return till the heavens be no more.

Thirdly, Man's life is a swift thing; not only a passing, but a flying vanity. Have you not observed how swiftly a shadow runs along the ground, in a cloudy and a windy day, suddenly darkening the places beautified before with the beams of the sun, but as suddenly disappearing? Such is the life of man on the earth, for "he fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not," Job xiv. 2. A weaver's shuttle is very swift in its motion; in a moment it is thrown from one side of the web to the other; yet "our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle," chap. vii. 6. How quickly is man tossed through time, into eternity! See how Job describes the swiftness of the time of life, chap. ix. 25, 26. "Now my days are swifter than a post; they flee away, they see no good. They are passed away as the swift ships; as the eagle that hasteth to the pray." He com-

pares his days with a post, a foot-post; a runner, who runs speedily to carry tidings, and will make no stay. But though the post were like Ahimaaz, who overrun Cushi, our days would be swifter than he; for they flee away, like a man fleeing for his life before the pursuing enemy; he runs with his utmost vigour, yet our days run as fast as he. But this is not all; even he who is fleeing for his life, cannot run always: he must needs sometimes stand still, lie down, or turn in somewhere, as Sisera did into Jael's tent, to refresh himself: but our time never halts. Therefore it is compared to ships, that can sail night and day without intermission, till they reach their port; and to swift ships, ships of desire, in which men quickly arrive at their desired haven; or ships of pleasure, that sail more swiftly than ships of burden. Yet the wind failing, the ship's course is checked: but our time always runs with a rapid course. Therefore it is compared to the eagle flying; not with his ordinary flight, for that is not sufficient to represent the swiftness of our days; but when he flies upon his prey, which is with an extraordinary swiftness. And thus, even thus, our days flee away.

Having thus discoursed of death, let us improve it in discerning the vanity of the world; in bearing up, with Christian contentment and patience under all troubles and difficulties in it; in mortifying our lusts; in cleaving unto the Lord with full purpose of heart, at all hazards, and in preparing for death's approach.

1. Let us hence, as in a looking-glass, behold the vanity of the world, and of all those things in it, which men so much value and esteem; and therefore set their hearts upon. The rich and the poor are equally intent upon this world; they bow the knee to it; yet it is but a clay god: they court the bulky vanity, and run eagerly to catch this shadow. The rich man is hugged to death in its embraces; and the poor man wearies himself in the fruitless pursuit. What wonder if the world's smiles overcome us, when we pursue it so eagerly, even while it frowns upon us! But look into the grave, O man! consider and be wise; listen to the doctrine of death; and learn, that, "hold as fast as thou canst, thou shalt be forced to let go thy hold of the world at length." Though thou load thyself with the fruits of this earth; yet all shall fall off when thou comest to creep into thy hole, the house, under ground, appointed for all living. When death comes, thou must bid an eternal farewell to thy enjoyments in this world: thou must leave thy goods to another; Luke xii. 20, "And whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" Thy portion of these things shall be very little ere long." If thou lie down on the grass, and stretch thyself at full length, and observe the print of thy body, when thou risest, thou

mayest see how much of this earth will fall to thy share at last. It may be thou shalt get a coffin, and a winding-sheet: but thou art not sure of that; many who have had abundance of wealth, yet have not had so much when they took up their new house in the land of silence. But however that be, more you cannot expect. It was a mortifying lesson, which Saladin, when dying, gave to his soldiers. He called for his standard-bearer, and ordered him to take his winding-sheet upon his pike, and go out to the camp with it, and tell them that of all his conquests, victories, and triumphs, he had nothing now left him, but that piece of linen to wrap his body in for burial. "This world is a false friend," who leaves a man in time of greatest need, and flees from him when he has most to do. When thou art lying on a deathbed, all thy friends and relations cannot rescue thee; all thy substance cannot ransom thee, nor procure thee a reprieve for one day; nay, not for one hour. Yea, the more thou possessest of this world's goods, thy sorrow at death is likely to be the greater; for though one may live more commodiously in a palace than in a cottage, yet he may die more easily in the cottage, where he has very little to make him fond of life.

2. It may serve as a storehouse for Christian contentment and patience under worldly losses and crosses. A close application of the doctrine of death is an excellent remedy against fretting, and gives some ease to a troubled heart. When Job had sustained very great losses, he sat down contented, with this meditation, Job i. 21, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord." When Providence brings a mortality or murrian among your cattle, how ready are you to fret and complain! but the serious consideration of your own death, to which you have a notable help from such providential occurrences, may be of use to silence your complaints, and quiet your spirits. Look to "the house appointed for all living," and learn, 1. "That you must abide a more severe thrust than the loss of worldly goods." Do not cry out for a thrust in the leg or arm: for ere long there will be a long home thrust at the heart.—You may lose your dearest relations: the wife may lose her husband, and the husband his wife; the parents may lose their dear children, and the children their parents; but if any of these trials happen to you, remember you must lose your own life at last; and "Wherefore doth a living man complain?" Lam. iii. 39. It is always profitable to consider, under affliction, that our case might have been worse than it is. Whatever is consumed, or taken from us, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we" ourselves "are not consumed," ver. 22.

2. "It is but for a short space of time that we are in this world." It is but a little that our necessities require in so short a space of time: when death comes, we shall stand in need of none of these things. Why should men rack their heads with cares how to provide for to-morrow; while they know not if they shall then need any thing? Though a man's provision for his journey be nearly spent, he is not disquieted, if he think he is near home. Are you working by candle light, and is there little of your candle left? It may be there is as little sand in your glass; and if so, you have little use for it. 3. "You have matters of great weight that challenge your care." Death is at the door, beware you lose not your souls. If blood break out at one part of the body, they often open a vein in another part of it, to turn the stream of the blood, and to stop it. Thus the Spirit of God sometimes cures men of sorrow for earthly things, by opening the heart-vein to bleed for sin. Did we pursue heavenly things more vigorously when our affairs in this life prosper not, we should thereby gain a double advantage: our worldly sorrow would be diverted, and our best treasure increased. 4. "Crosses of this nature will not last long." The world's smiles and frowns will quickly be buried together in everlasting forgetfulness. Its smiles go away like foam on the water; and its frowns are as a passing stitch in a man's side. Time flies away with swift wings, and carries our earthly comforts, and crosses too, along with it: neither of them will accompany us into "the house appointed for all living. "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master," Job iii. 17—19. Cast a look into eternity, and you will see affliction here is but for a moment. The truth is, our time is so very short, that it will not allow either our joys or griefs to come to perfection. Wherefore, let them "that weep be as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not," &c., 1 Cor. vii. 29—31. 5. "Death will put all men on a level." The king and the beggar must dwell in one house, when they come to their journey's end; though their entertainment by the way be very different. "The small and the great are there," Job iii. 19. We are all in this world as on a stage; it is no great matter, whether a man act the part of a prince or a peasant, for when they have acted their parts, they must both get behind the curtain, and appear no more. 6. If thou be not in Christ, whatever thy afflictions now be, "troubles a thousand times worse, are abiding thee in another world." Death will turn thy crosses into pure unmixed curses: and then, how gladly wouldst thou return to

thy former afflicted state, and purchase it at any rate, were there any possibility of such a return. If thou be in Christ, thou mayest well bear thy cross. Death will put an end to all thy troubles. If a man on a journey be not well accommodated, where he lodges only for a night, he will not trouble himself much about the matter; because he is not to stay there, it is not his home. You are on the road to eternity; let it not disquiet you that you meet with some hardships in the inn of this world, Fret not, because it is not so well with you as with some others. One man travels with a cane in his hand; his fellow-traveller, perhaps, has but a common staff or stick: either of them will serve the turn. It is no great matter which of them be yours; both will be laid aside when you come to your journey's end.

3. It may serve for a bridle, to curb all manner of lusts, particularly those conversant about the body. A serious visit made to cold death, and that solitary mansion, the grave, might be of good use to repress them.

(1.) It may be of use to cause men to cease from their inordinate care for the body; which is to many the bane of their souls. Often do these questions, "What shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" leave no room for another of more importance, namely, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" The soul is put on the rack, to answer these mean questions in favour of the body; while its own eternal interests are neglected. But ah! why are men so busy to repair the ruinous cottage; leaving the inhabitant to bleed to death of his wounds, unheeded, unregarded? Why so much care for the body, to the neglect of the concerns of the immortal soul? O be not so anxious for what can only serve your bodies; since, ere long, the clods of cold earth will serve for back and belly too.

(2.) It may abate your pride on account of bodily endowments, which vain man is apt to glory in. Value not yourselves on the blossom of youth; for while you are in your blooming years, you are but ripening for a grave; death gives the fatal stroke, without asking any body's age. Glory not in your strength, it will quickly be gone: the time will soon be, when you shall not be able to turn yourselves on a bed; and you must be carried by your grieving friends to you rlong home. And what signifies your healthful constitution? Death doth not always enter in soonest where it begins soonest to knock at the door; but makes as great dispatch with some in a few hours, as with others in many years. Value not yourselves on your beauty, which "shall consume in the grave," Psalm xlix. 14. Remember the change which death makes on the fairest face, Job

xiv. 20, "Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away." Death makes the greatest beauty so loathsome, that it must be buried out of sight. Could a looking-glass be used in "the house appointed for all living," it would be a terror to those who now look oftener into their glasses than into their Bibles. And what though the body be gorgeously arrayed? The finest clothes are but badges of our sin and shame; and in a little time will be exchanged for a winding-sheet, when the body will become a feast to the worms.

(3.) It may be a check upon sensuality and fleshly lusts, 1 Pet. ii. 11, "I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." It is hard to cause wet wood to take fire; and when the fire doth take hold of it, it is soon extinguished. Sensuality makes men most unfit for divine communications, and is an effectual means to quench the Spirit. Intemperance in eating and drinking carries on the ruin of soul and body at once; and hastens death, while it makes the man most unmeet for it. Therefore, "Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and so that day come upon you unawares," Luke xxi. 34. But O how often is the soul struck through with a dart, in gratifying the senses! At these doors destruction enters in. Therefore Job "made a covenant with his eyes," chap. xxxi. 1. "The mouth of a strange woman is a deep pit: he that is abhorred of the Lord, shall fall therein," Prov. xxii. 14. "Let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall," 1 Cor. x. 12. Beware of lasciviousness; study modesty in your apparrel, words, and actions. The ravens of the valley of death, will at length pick out the wanton eye: the obscene filthy tongue will at length be quiet, in the land of silence; and grim death, embracing the body in its cold arms, will effectually allay the heat of all fleshly lusts.

(4.) In a word it may check our earthly-mindedness; and at once knock down "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." Ah! if we must die why are we thus? Why so fond of temporal things; so anxious to get them, so eager in the embraces of them, so mightily touched with the loss of them? Let me, upon a view of "the house appointed for all living," address the worldling in the words of Solomon. Prov. xxiii. 5, "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not?" For riches certainly make themselves wings, "they flee away as an eagle towards heaven." Riches, and all worldly things are but a fair nothing; they are that which is not. They are not what they seem to be: they are but gilded vanities, that deceive the eye. Comparitively, they are not; there is infinitely more of nothingness and not being, than of being, or reality, in the best of them. What is the world and all that is in it, but

a fashion, or fair shew, such as men make on the stage, a passing show? 1 Cor. vii. 31. Royal pomp is but gaudy show, or appearance, in God's account, Acts xxv. 23. The best name they get, is good things: but observe it, they are only the wicked man's good things, Luke xvi. 25, "Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things," says Abraham, in the parable, to the rich man in hell. Well may the men of the world call these things their goods; for there is no other good in them, about them, nor attending them.—Now, wilt thou set thine eyes upon empty shadows and fancies? Wilt thou cause thine eyes to fly on them, as the word is? Shall men's hearts fly out at their eyes upon them, as a ravenous bird on its prey? if they do, let them know, that at length these shall flee as fast away from them, as their eyes flew upon them: like a flock of fair-feathered birds, that settle on a fool's ground; which, when he runs to catch them as his own, do immediately take wing, fly away, and sitting down on his neighbour's ground, elude his expectation, Luke xii. 10, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall these things be?" Though you do not make wings to them, as many do; they make themselves wings, and fly away; not as a tame house-bird, which may be caught again; but as an eagle, which quickly flies out of sight, and cannot be recalled. Forbear thou then to behold these things. O mortal! there is no good reason to be given why thou shouldest set thine eyes upon them. This world is a great inn, in the road to eternity, to which thou art travelling. Thou art attended by those things, as servants belonging to the inn where thou lodgest: they wait upon thee while thou art there; and when thou goest away, they will convoy thee to the door. But they are not thine, they will go away with thee; but return to wait on other strangers, as they did on thee.

4. It may serve as a spring of Christian resolution, to cleave to Christ, adhere to his truths, and continue in his ways; whatever we may suffer for so doing. It would much allay the fear of man, that bringeth a snare. "Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die?" Isa. li. 12. Look on persecutors as pieces of brittle clay, that shall be dashed in pieces, for then shall you despise them as foes, that are mortal; whose terror to others in the land of the living, shall quickly die with themselves. The serious consideration of the shortness of our time, and the certainty of death, will teach us, that all the advantage which we can make by our apostacy, in time of trial, is not worth the while; it is not worth going out of our way to get it: and what we refuse to forego for Christ's sake, may be quickly taken from us by

death. But we can never lose it so honourably, as for the cause of Christ, and his gospel: for what glory is it, that you give up what you have in the world, when God takes it away from you by death, whether you will or not? This consideration may teach us to undervalue life itself, and choose to forego it, rather than to sin. The worst that men can do, is to take away that life, which we cannot long keep, though all the world should conspire to help us to retain the spirit. If we refuse to offer it up to God when he calls for it in defence of his honour, he can take it from us another way; as it fared with him, who could not burn for Christ, but was afterwards burnt by an accidental fire in his house.

5. It may serve for a spur to incite us to prepare for death. Consider, 1. Your eternal state will be according to the state in which you die: death will open the doors of heaven or hell to you. As the tree falls, so it shall lie through eternity. If the infant be dead born, the whole world cannot raise it to life again: and if one die out of Christ, in an unregenerate state, there is no more hope of him for ever. 2. Seriously consider what it is to go into another world; a world of spirits, wherewith we are very little acquainted. How frightful is converse with spirits to poor mortals in this life! and how dreadful is the case, when men are hurried away into another world, not knowing but devils may be their companions for ever! Let us then give all diligence to make and advance our acquaintance with the Lord of that world. 3. It is but a short time you have to prepare for death: therefore now or never, seeing the time assigned for preparation will soon be over. Eccl. ix. 10, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." How can we be idle, having so great a work to do, and so little time to do it in? But if the time be short, the work of preparation for death, though hard work, will not last long. The shadows of the evening makes the labourer work cheerfully; knowing the time to be at hand, when he will be called in from his labour. 4. Much of our short time is over already; and the youngest of us all cannot assure himself, that there is as much of his time to come, as is past. Our life in the world is but a short preface to long eternity; and much of the tale is told. Oh! shall we not double our diligence, when so much of our time is spent, and so little of our great work is done? 5. The present time is flying away: and we cannot bring back time past, it hath taken an eternal farewell of us: there is no kindling the fire again that is burnt to ashes. The time to come is not ours: and we have no assurance of a share in it when it comes. We have

nothing we can call ours, but the present moment; and that is flying away. How soon our time may be at an end, we know not. Die we must: but who can tell us when? If death kept one set time for all, we were in no hazard of a surprise: but daily observation shews us, that there is no such thing. Now the flying shadow of our life allows no time for loitering. The rivers run speedily into the sea, from whence they came; but not so speedily as man to dust, from whence he came. The stream of time is the swiftest current, and quickly runs out to eternity. 6. If once death carry us off, there is no coming back to mend our matters, Job xiv. 14, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Dying is a thing we cannot get a trial of; it is what we can only do once, Heb. ix. 27, "It is appointed unto men *once* to die." And that which can be but once done, and yet is of so much importance that our all depends on our doing it right, we have need to use the utmost diligence that we may do it well. Therefore prepare for death.

If you who are unregenerate ask me, what you shall do to prepare for death, that you may die safely; I answer, I have told you already what must be done. Your nature and state must be changed: you must be united to Jesus Christ by faith. Till this be done, you are not capable of other directions, which belongs to a person's dying comfortably: whereof we may discourse afterwards in the due place.

PART II.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE WICKED IN THEIR DEATH.

The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.—PROV. xiv. 32.

THIS text looks like the cloud between the Israelites and Egyptians; having a dark side towards the latter, and a bright side towards the former. It represents death like Pharaoh's jailor, bringing the chief butler and the chief baker out of prison; the one to be restored to his office, and the other to be led to execution. It shews the difference between the godly and ungodly in their death; who, as they act a very different part in life, so, in death, have a very different exit.

As to the death of a wicked man, here is, 1. The manner of his passing out of the world. He is "driven away;" namely, in his death, as is clear from the opposite clause. He is forcibly thrust out of his place in this world; driven away as chaff before the wind. 2. The state he passeth away into. He dies also in a hopeless state; "but the righteous hath hope in his death;" which plainly imports the hopelessness of the wicked in their death. Whereby is not meant, that no wicked man shall have any hope at all when he is dying, but shall die in despair. No: sometimes it is so indeed; but frequently it is otherwise; foolish virgins may, and often do, hope to the last breath. But the wicked man has no solid hope: as for the delusive hopes he entertains himself with, death will root them up, and he shall be for ever irretrievably miserable.

As to the death of a righteous man, he hath hope in his death. This is ushered in with a "but," importing the removal of these dreadful circumstances, with which the wicked man is attended, who is driven away in his wickedness; but the godly are not so. Not so, in the manner of their passing out of the world. The righteous are not driven away as chaff before the wind; but led away as a bride to the marriage chamber, carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 22. Not so as to their state, when passing out of this life. The righteous man dies, not in a sinful, but in a holy state. He goes not away in his sin, but out of it. In his life he was putting off the old man, changing his prison garments; and now the remaining rags of them are removed, and he is adorned with robes of glory. Not in a hopeless, but a hopeful state. He hath hope in his death; he has the grace of hope, and the well-founded expectation of better things than he ever had in this world: and though the stream of his hope at death may run shallow, yet he has still so much of it as makes him venture his eternal interests upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

Doctrine 1. The wicked dying, are driven away in their wickedness, and in a hopeless state.

In speaking to this doctrine, I. I shall show how, and in what sense, the wicked are "driven away in their wickedness" at death. II. I shall prove the hopelessness of their state at death. And then apply the whole.

I. How, and in what sense, the wicked are "driven away in their wickedness." In discoursing of this matter, I shall briefly inquire, 1. What is meant by their being "driven away." 2. Whence they shall be driven, and whither. 3. In what respects they may be said to be driven away "in their wickedness." But before I proceed, let me remark, that you are mistaken if you think that no persons

are to be called wicked, but they who are avowedly vicious and profane; as if the devil could dwell in none but those whose name is Legion. In Scripture account, all who are not righteous, in the manner hereafter explained, are reckoned wicked. Therefore the the text divides the whole world into two sorts, "the righteous and the wicked:" and you will see the same thing in Malachi iii. 18, "Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked." Wherefore if you be not righteous, you are wicked. If you have not an imputed righteousness, and also an implanted righteousness, or holiness; if you be yet in your natural state, unregenerated, not united to Christ by faith; however moral and blameless in the eyes of men your conversation may be, you are the wicked who shall be driven away in their wickedness, if death find you in that state. Now,

1. As to the meaning of this phrase, "driven away," there are three things in it; the wicked shall be taken away suddenly, violently, and irresistibly.

(1.) Unrenewed men shall be taken away suddenly at death. Not that all wicked men die suddenly; nor that they are all wicked that die so; God forbid! But, 1. Death commonly comes upon them unexpectedly, and so surprises them, as the deluge surprised the old world, though they were forewarned of it long before it came; and as travail cometh on a woman with child, with surprising suddenness, although looked for and expected, 1 Thess. v. 3. Death seizes them, as a creditor doth his debtor, to hale him to prison, Psalm lv. 15, and that when they are not aware. Death comes in, as a thief, at the window, and finds them full of busy thoughts about this life which that very day perish. 2. Death always seizes them unprepared for it; the old house falls down about their ears, before they have another provided. When death casts them to the door, they have not where to lay their heads; unless it be on a bed of fire and brimstone. The soul and body are as it were hugging one another in mutual embraces; when death comes like a whirlwind, and separates them. 3. Death hurries them away in a moment to destruction, and makes a most dismal change: the man for the most part never knows where he is, till "in hell he lift up his eyes," Luke xvi. 23. The floods of wrath suddenly overwhelm his soul; and ere he is aware, he is plunged into the bottomless pit.

(2.) The unrenewed man is taken away out of the world violently. Driving is a violent action; he is "chased out of the world," Job xviii. 18. Fain would he stay, if he could; but death drags him away, like a malefactor to the execution. He sought no other portion than the profits and pleasures of this world: he hath no other

he really desires no other: how can he then go away out of it, if he were not driven?

Question. "But may not a wicked man be willing to die?" *Answer.* He may indeed be willing to die; but observe it is only in one of three cases. 1. In a fit of passion, by reason of some trouble that he is impatient to be rid of. Thus, many persons, when their passion has got the better of their reason, and when, on that account they are most unfit to die, will be ready to cry, "O to be gone!" But should their desire be granted, and death come at their call, they would quickly shew they were not in earnest; and that, if they go they must be driven away against their will. 2. When they are brim-full of despair may they be willing to die. Thus Saul murdered himself; and Spira wished to be in hell, that he might know the uttermost of what he believed he was to suffer. In this manner men may seek after death, while it flees from them. But fearful is the violence these undergo, whom the terrors of God do thus drive. 3. When they are dreaming of happiness after death. Foolish virgins, under the power of delusion, as to their state, may be willing to die, having no fear of lying down in sorrow. How many are there, who can give no scriptural ground for their hope, who yet have no bands in their death! Many are driven to darkness sleeping: they go off like lambs, who would roar like lions, did they but know what place they are going to; though the chariot in which they are, drive furiously to the depths of hell, yet they fear not, because they are fast asleep.

(3.) The unregenerate man is taken away irresistably. He must go, though sorely against his will. Death will take no refusal, nor admit of any delay; though the man has not lived half his days, according to his own computation. If he will not bow, it will break him. If he will not come forth, it will pull the house down about his ears; for there he must not stay. Although the physician help, friends groan, the wife and children cry, and he himself use his utmost efforts to retain the spirit, his soul is required of him; yield he must, and go where he shall never more see light.

2. Let us consider, whence they are driven, and whither. When the wicked die, (1.) They are driven out of this world, where they sinned, into the other world, where they must be judged, and receive their particular sentences, Heb. ix. 27, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." They shall no more return to their beloved earth. Though their hearts are wedded to their earthly enjoyments, they must leave them, they can carry nothing hence. How sorrowful must their departure be, when they have nothing in view so good as that which they leave behind them!

(2.) They are driven out of the society of the saints on earth, into the society of the damned in hell, Luke xvi. 22, 23, "The rich man also died, and was buried. And in hell he lift up his eyes." What a multitude of the devil's goats do now take place among Christ's sheep! but at death they shall be "led forth with the workers of iniquity," Psalm cxxv. 5. There is a mixed multitude in this world, but no mixture in the other; each party is there set by themselves. Though hypocrites grow here as tares among the wheat, death will root them up, and they shall be bound in bundles for the fire. (3.) They are driven out of time into eternity. While time lasts with them, there is hope; but when time goes, all hope goes with it. Precious time is now lavishly spent: it lies so heavy on the hands of many, that they think themselves obliged to take several ways to drive away time. But beware of being at a loss what to do in life: improve time for eternity, whilst you have it; for ere long death will drive it from you, and you from it, so as you shall never meet again. (4.) They are driven out of their specious pretences to piety. Death strips them of the splendid robes of a fair profession, with which some of them are adorned; and turns them off the stage, in the rags of a wicked heart and life. The word "hypocrite" properly signifies a stage-player, who appears to be what indeed he is not. This world is the stage on which these children of the devil personate the children of God. Their shew of religion is the player's coat, under which one must look, who will judge of them aright. Death turns them out of their coat, and they appear in their native dress: it unveils them, and takes off their mask. There are none in the other world, who pretend to be better than they really are. Depraved nature acts in the regions of horror undisguised. (5.) They are driven away from all means of grace; and are set beyond the line, quite out of all prospect of mercy. There is no more an opportunity to buy oil for the lamp; it is gone out at death, and can never be lighted again. There may be offers of mercy and peace made, after they are gone; but they are to others, not to them: there are no such offers in the place to which they are driven; these offers are only made in that place from which they are driven away.

3. In what respects may they be said to be driven away in their wickedness? *Answer.* 1. In respect of their being driven away in their sinful unconverted state. Having lived enemies to God, they die in a state of enmity to him: for none are brought into the eternal state of consummate happiness, but by the way of the state of grace in this life. The child that is dead in the womb, is born dead, and is cast out of the womb into the grave: so he who is dead while

he liveth, or is spiritually dead, is cast forth of the womb of time, in the same state of death, into the pit of utter misery. O miserable death, to die in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity! it had been incomparably better for such as die thus, that they had never been born. 2. In regard that they die sinning, acting wickedly against God, in contradiction to the divine law; for they can do nothing but sin while they live: so death takes them in the very act of sinning; violently draws them from the embraces of their lusts, and drives them away to the tribunal, to receive their sentence. It is a remarkable expression, Job xxxvi. 14, "They die in youth:" the marginal reading is, "their soul dieth in youth;" their lusts being lively, their desires vigorous, and expectations big, as is common in youth. "And their life is among the unclean;" or, "And the company" or herd "of them" dieth "among the Sodomites," namely, is taken away in the heat of their sin and wickedness, as the men of Sodom were, Gen. xix; Luke xvii. 28, 29. 3. As they are driven away, loaded with the guilt of all their sins; this is the winding-sheet that shall lie down with them in the dust, Job xx. 11. Their works follow them into the other world; they go away with the yoke of their transgressions wreathed about their necks. Guilt is a bad companion in life, but how terrible will it be in death! It lies now, perhaps, like cold brimstone on their benumbed consciences: but when death opens the way for sparks of divine vengeance, like fire, to fall upon it, it will make dreadful flames in the conscience, in which the soul will be, as it were, wrapt up for ever. 4. The wicked are driven away in their wickedness, in so far as they die under the absolute power of their wickedness. While there is hope, there is some restraint on the worst of men; those moral endowments, which God gives to a number of men, for the benefit of mankind in this life, are so many restraints upon the impetuous wickedness of human nature. But all hope being cut off, and these gifts withdrawn, the wickedness of the wicked will then arrive at its perfection. As the seeds of grace, sown in the hearts of the elect, come to their full maturity at death; so wicked and hellish dispositions in the reprobate, come then to their highest pitch. Their prayers to God will then be turned to horrible curses, and their praises to hideous blasphemies, Matth. xxii. 13, "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This gives a dismal, but correct view of the state of the wicked in another world.

II. I shall discover the hopelessness of the state of unrenenewed men at death. It appears to be very hopeless, if we consider these four things.

1. Death cuts off their hopes and prospects of peace and pleasure

in this life, Luke xii. 19, 20, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" They look for great matters in this world, they hope to increase their wealth, to see their families prosper, and to live at ease; but death comes like a stormy wind, and shakes off all their fond hopes, like green fruit from off a tree. "When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him," Job xx. 23. He may begin a web of contrivances for advancing his worldly interest; but before he gets it wrought out, death comes and cuts it off. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish," Psalm cxlvi. 4.

2. When death comes, they have no solid ground to hope for eternal happiness. "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?" Job xxvii. 8. Whatever hopes they fondly entertain, they are not founded on God's word, which is the only sure ground of hope; if they knew their own case, they would see themselves only happy in a dream. And indeed what hope can they have? The law is plain against them, and condemns them. The curses of it, those cords of death, are about them already. The Saviour whom they slighted, is now their Judge; and their Judge is their enemy. How then can they hope? They have bolted the door of mercy against themselves, by their unbelief. They have despised the remedy, and therefore must die without mercy. They have no saving interest in Jesus Christ, the only channel of conveyance, through which mercy flows: and therefore they can never taste it. The sword of justice guards the door of mercy, so as none can enter in, but the members of the mystical body of Christ, over whose head is a covert of atoning blood, the Mediator's blood. These indeed may pass without a harm, for justice has nothing to require of them. But others cannot pass, since they are not in Christ: death comes to them with the sting in it, the sting of unpardoned guilt. It is armed against them with all the force which the sanction of a holy law can give it, 1 Cor. xv. 56, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." When that law was given on Sinai, "the whole mount quaked greatly," Exod. xix. 18. When the Redeemer was making satisfaction for the elect's breaking it, "the earth did quake, and the rocks rent," Matt. xxvii. 51. What possible ground of hope, then, is there to the wicked man, when death comes upon him armed with the force of this law? How can he escape that fire, which "burnt unto the midst of heaven?" Deut. iv. 11. How shall he be able to

stand in that smoke, that "ascended as the smoke of a furnace?" Exod. xix. 11. How will he endure the terrible "thunders and lightnings," ver. 17, and dwell in "the darkness, clouds, and thick darkness?" Deut. iv. 11. All these comparisons heaped together do but faintly represent the fearful tempest of wrath and indignation, which shall pursue the wicked to the lowest hell; and for ever abide on those who are driven to darkness at death.

4. Death roots up their delusive hopes of eternal happiness; then it is that their covenant with death and agreement with hell, is broken. They are awakened out of their golden dreams, and at length lift up their eyes; Job viii. 14, "Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web." They trust that all shall be well with them after death: but their trust is as a web woven out of their own bowels, with a great deal of art and industry. They wrap themselves up in their hope, as the spider wraps herself in her web. But it is a weak and slender defence; for however it may withstand the threatenings of the word of God, death, that besom of destruction, will sweep them and it both away, so as there shall not be the least shred of it left; and he, who this moment will not let his hope go, shall next moment be utterly hopeless. Death overturns the house built on the sand; it leaves no man under the power of delusion.

4. Death makes their state absolutely and for ever hopeless. Matters cannot be retrieved and amended after death. For, 1. Time once gone can never be recalled. If cries or tears, price or pains, could bring time back again, the wicked man might have hope in his death. But tears of blood will not prevail; nor will his groans for millions of ages cause it to return. The sun will not stand still for the sluggard to awake and enter on his journey; and when once it is gone down, he needs not expect the night to be turned into day for his sake: he must lodge through the long night of eternity, where his time left him. 2. There is no returning to this life, to amend what is amiss; it is a state of probation and trial, which terminates at death; therefore we cannot return to it again; it is but once we thus live, and once we die. Death carries the wicked man to "his own place," Acts i. 25. This life is our working day. Death closes our day and our work together. We may admit the wicked might have some hope in their death, if, after death has opened their eyes, they could return to life, and have but the trial of one Sabbath, one offer of Christ, one day, or but one hour more, to make up their peace with God: but "man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep," Job xiv. 12. 3. In the other

world, men have no access to get their ruined state and condition retrieved, though they be ever so desirous of it. "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest," Eccl. ix. 10. Now a man may flee from the wrath to come; he may get into a refuge. But when once death has done its work, "the door is shut;" there are no more offers of mercy, no more pardons: where the tree is fallen, there it must lie.

Let what has been said be carefully pondered; and that it may be of use, let me exhort you,

First, To take heed that you entertain no hopes of heaven, but what are built on a solid foundation: tremble to think what fair hopes of happiness death sweeps away, like cobwebs; how the hopes of many are cut off, when they seem to themselves to be at the very threshold of heaven; how, in the moment they expected to be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, into the regions of bliss and peace, they are carried by devils into the society of the damned in hell, into the place of torment, and regions of horror. I beseech you to beware, 1. Of a hope built upon ground that was never cleared. The wise builder digged deep, Luke vi. 48. Were your hopes of heaven never shaken; but have you had good hopes all your days? Alas for it! you may see the mystery of your case explained, Luke xi. 21, "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are at peace. But if they have been shaken, take heed lest some breaches only have been made in the old building, which you have got repaired again, by ways and means of your own. I assure you, that your hope, however fair a building it is, is not fit to trust to, unless your old hopes have been razed, and you have built on a foundation quite new. 2. Beware of that hope which looks bright in the dark, but loses all its lustre when it is set in the light of God's word, when it is examined and tried by the touchstone of divine revelation, John iii. 20, 21, "For every one that doth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doth the truth, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." That hope, which cannot abide scripture trial, but sinks when searched into by sacred truth, is a delusion, and not a true hope: for God's word is always a friend to the graces of God's Spirit, and an enemy to delusion. 3. Beware of that hope, which stands without being supported by scriptural evidences. Alas! many are big with hopes, who cannot give, because they really have not, any scripture grounds for them. Thou hopest that all will be well with thee after death: but what word of God is it, on which thou hast been caused to hope? Psalm cxix. 49. What scriptural evidence hast

thou to prove that thy hope is not the hope of the hypocrite? What hast thou, after impartial self-examination, as in the sight of God, found in thyself, which the word of God determines to be a sure evidence of his right to eternal life, who is possessed of it? Numbers are ruined with such hopes as stand unsupported by scriptural evidence. Men are fond and tenacious of these hopes; but death will throw them down, and leave the self-deceiver hopeless. 4. Beware of that hope of heaven, which doth not prepare and dispose you for heaven, which never makes your soul more holy, 1 John iii. 3, "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." The hope of the most part of men, is rather a hope to be free from pain and torment in another life, than a hope of true happiness, the nature whereof is not understood and discerned: therefore it rests in sloth and indolence, and does not excite to mortification and a heavenly life. So far are they from hoping aright for heaven, that they must own, if they speak their genuine sentiments, removing out of this world into any other place whatever, is rather their fear than their hope. The glory of the heavenly city does not at all draw their hearts upwards to it, nor do they lift up their heads with joy, in the prospect of arriving at it. If they had the true hope of the marriage day, they would, as the bride, the "Lamb's wife," be "making themselves ready for it," Rev. xix. 7. But their hopes are produced by their sloth, and their sloth is nourished by their hopes. Oh, Sirs, as you would not be driven away helpless in your death, beware of these hopes! Raze them now, and build on a new foundation, lest death leave not one stone of them upon another, and you never be able to hope any more.

Secondly, Hasten, O sinners, out of your wickedness, out of your sinful state, and out of your wicked life, if you would not at death be driven away in your wickedness. Remember the fatal end of the wicked as the text represents it. I know there is a great difference in the death of the wicked, as to some circumstances: but all of them, in their death, agree in this, that they are driven away in their wickedness. Some of them die resolutely, as if they scorned to be afraid; some in raging despair, so filled with horror that they cry out as if they were already in hell; others in sullen despondency, oppressed with fears, so that their hearts sink within them, at the remembrance of misspent time, and the view which they have of eternity, having neither head nor heart to do anything for their own relief. And others die stupidly; they live like beasts, and they die like beasts, without any concern on their spirits, about their eternal state. They groan under their bodily distress but have no sense of the danger of their soul. One may, with almost as much

prospect of success, speak to a stone, as speak to them; vain is the attempt to teach them; nothing that can be said moves them. To discourse to them, either of the joys of heaven on the torments of hell, is to plough on a rock, or beat the air. Some die like the foolish virgins, dreaming of heaven; their foreheads are steeled against the fears of hell, with presumptuous hopes of heaven. The business of those who would be useful to them, is not to answer doubts about the case of their souls, but to discover to them their own false hopes. But which way soever the unconverted man dies, he is "driven away in his wickedness." O dreadful case! Oh, let the consideration of so horrid a departure out of this world, move you to flee to Jesus Christ, as the all-sufficient Saviour, an almighty Redeemer. Let it prevail to drive you out of your wickedness, to holiness of heart and life. Though you reckon it pleasant to live in wickedness, yet you cannot but own, it is bitter to die in it. And if you leave it not in time, you must go on in your wickedness to hell, the proper place of it, that it may be set there on its own base. For when you are passing out of this world, all your sins, from the first to the last of them, will swarm about you, hang upon you, accompany you to the other world, and, as so many furies, surround you there for ever.

Thirdly, O be concerned for others, especially for your relations, that they may not continue in their sinful natural state, but be brought into a state of salvation; lest they be driven away in their wickedness at death. What would you not do to prevent any of your friends dying an untimely and violent death? But, alas! do you not see them in hazard of being driven away in their wickedness? Is not death approaching them, even the youngest of them? And are they not strangers to true Christianity, remaining in that state which they came into the world? Oh! make haste to pluck the brand out of the fire, lest it be burned to ashes. The death of relations often leaves a sting in the hearts of those they leave behind them, because they did not do for their souls as they had opportunity; and because the opportunity is for ever taken out of their hands.

Doctrine II. The state of the godly in death is a hopeful state. We have seen the dark side of the cloud looking towards ungodly men, passing out of the world; let us now take a view of the bright side of it, shinning on the godly, as they enter on their eternal state. In discoursing on this subject, I shall confirm this doctrine, answer an objection against it, and then make some practical improvement of the whole.

For confirmation, let it be observed, that although the passage

out of this world by death has a frightful aspect to poor mortals, and to miscarry in it must needs be of fatal consequence; yet the following circumstances make the state of the godly in their death, happy and hopeful.

1. They have a trusty good Friend before them in the other world. Jesus Christ, their best Friend, is Lord of the land to which death carries them. When Joseph sent for his father to come down to him to Egypt, telling him, "God had made him lord over all Egypt," Gen. xlv. 9, "And Jacob "saw the waggons Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob revived," ver. 27. He resolves to undertake the journey. I think, when the Lord calls a godly man out of the world, he sends him such glad tidings, and such a kind invitation into the other world, that, he has faith to believe it, his spirit must revive, when he sees the waggon of death which comes to carry him thither. It is true, indeed, he has a weighty trial to undergo,—after death the judgment. But the case of the godly is altogether hopeful; for the Lord of the land is their husband, and their husband is the judge; "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son," John v. 22. Surely the case of the wife is hopeful, when her own husband is her judge, even such a husband as hates putting away. No husband is so loving and so tender of his spouse, as the Lord Christ is of his. One would think it would be a very bad land, which a wife would not willingly go to, where her husband is the ruler and judge. Moreover, their judge is the advocate, 1 John ii. 1, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Therefore they need not fear their being put back, and falling into condemnation. What can be more favourable? Can they think, that he who pleads their cause, will himself pass sentence against them? Yet farther, their advocate is their Redeemer; they are "redeemed with the precious blood of Christ," 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. So when he pleads for them, he is pleading his own cause. Though an advocate may be careless of the interest of one who employs him, yet surely he will do his utmost to defend his own right, which he has purchased with his money: and shall not their advocate defend the purchase of his own blood? But more than all that, their Redeemer is their head, and they are his members, Eph. v. 23, 30. Though one were so silly as to let his own purchase go, without standing up to defend his right, yet surely he will not part with a limb of his own body. Is not their case then hopeful in death, who are so closely linked and allied to the Lord of the other world, who has "the keys of hell and of death?"

2. They shall have a safe passage to another world. They must indeed go through "the valley of the shadow of death;" but though

it be in itself a dark and shady vale, it shall be a valley of hope to them: they shall not be driven through it, but be as men in perfect safety, who fear no evil, Psalm xxiii. 4. Why should they thus fear? They have the Lord of the land's safe conduct, his pass sealed with his own blood; namely, the blessed covenant, which is the saint's death-bed comfort, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, "Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." Who then can harm them? It is safe riding in Christ's chariot, Cant. iii. 9, both through life and death. They have good and honourable attendants, a guard, even a guard of angels. These encamp about them in the time of their life; and surely will not leave them in the day of their death. These happy ministering spirits are attendants on their Lord's bride, and will doubtless convey her safe home to his house. When friends in mournful mood stand by the saint's bedside, waiting to see him draw his last breath, his soul is waited for by angels, to be carried into Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 22. The captain of the saint's salvation is the captain of this holy guard: he was their guide even unto death, and he will be their guide through it too, Psalm xxiii. 4, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." They may, without fear, pass that river, being confident it shall not overflow them; and they may walk through that fire, being sure they shall not be burnt by it.

Death can do them no harm. It cannot even hurt their bodies: for though it separate the soul from the body, it cannot separate the body from the Lord Jesus Christ. Even death is to them but sleep in Jesus, 1 Thess. iv. 14. They continue members of Christ, though in a grave. Their dust is precious dust; laid up in the grave as in their Lord's cabinet. They lie in a grave mellowing, as precious fruit laid up to be brought forth to him at the resurrection. The husbandman has corn in his barn, and corn lying in the ground: the latter is more precious to him than the former, because he looks to get it returned with increase. Even so the dead bodies of the saints are valued by their Saviour: they are "sown in corruption," to be "raised in incorruption"; "sown in dishonour," to be "raised in glory," 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43. It cannot hurt their souls. It is with the souls of the saints at death, as with Paul and his company in their voyage, whereof we have the history, Acts, chap. xxvii. The ship was broken to pieces, but the passengers got all safe to land. When the dying saint's speech is stopped, his eyes set, and his last breath drawn, the soul gets safe away into the heavenly paradise,

leaving the body to return to its earth, but in the joyful hope of a re-union at its glorious resurrection.—But how can death hurt the godly? it is a foiled enemy: if it cast them down, it is only that they may rise more glorious. "Our Saviour Jesus Christ hath abolished death," 2 Tim. i. 10. The soul and life of it is gone: it is but a walking shade that may fright, but cannot hurt saints: it is only the shadow of death to them: it is not the thing itself; their dying is but as dying, or somewhat like dying. The apostle tells us, "It is Christ that died," Rom. viii. 34. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, though stoned to death, yet only fell asleep, Acts vii. 60. Certainly the nature of death is quite changed, with respect to the saints. It is not to them, what it was to Jesus Christ their head: it is not the venomed ruining thing, wrapt up in the sanction of the first covenant, Gen. ii. 17, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." It comes to the godly without a sting: they may meet it with that salutation, "O death, where is thy sting? Is this *Mara?* Is this bitter death? It went out full into the world, when the first Adam opened the door to it, but the second Adam hath brought it again empty to his own people. I feel a sting, may the dying saint say: yet it is but a bee sting, stinging only through the skin: but, O death, where is thy sting, thine old sting, the serpent's sting, that stings to the heart and soul? The sting of death is sin: but that is taken away. If death arrest the saint, and carry him before the Judge, to answer for the debt he contracted, the debt will be found paid by the glorious Surety; and he has the discharge to shew. The thorn of guilt is pulled out of the man's conscience; and his name is blotted out of the black roll, and written among the living in Jerusalem. It is true, it is a great journey through the valley of the shadow of death: but the saint's burden is taken away from his back, his iniquity is pardoned, he may walk at ease: "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast:" the redeemed may walk at leisure there, free from all apprehensions of danger.

3. They shall have a joyful entrance into the other world. Their arrival in the regions of bliss, will be celebrated with rapturous hymns of praise to their glorious Redeemer. A dying day is a good day to a godly man. Yea, it is his best day; it is better to him than his birth-day, or than the most joyous day which he ever had on earth. "A good name," says the wise man, is "better than precious ointment: and the day of death, than the day of one's birth," Eccl. vii. 1. The notion of the immortality of the soul, and of future happiness, which obtained among some pagan nations, had wonderful effects on them. Some of them, when they mourned for the dead, did it in women's apparel; that, being moved with the inde-

cency of the garb, they might the sooner lay aside their mourning. Others buried them without any lamentation or mourning; but had a sacrifice, and a feast for friends, upon that occasion. Some were wont to mourn at births, and rejoice at burials.—But the practice of some Indian nations is yet more strange, where, upon the husband's decease, his wife, or wives, with a cheerful countenance, enter the flames prepared for the husband's corpse. But however false notions of a future state, assisted by pride, affectation of applause, apprehensions of difficulties in this life, and such like principles proper to depraved human nature, may influence rude uncultivated minds, when strengthened by the arts of hell; O what solid joy and consolation may they have, who are true Christians, being in Christ, who "hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel!" 2 Tim. i. 10. Death is one of those "all things," that "work together for good to them that love God," Rom. viii. 28. When the body dies, the soul is perfected: the body of death goes off, at the death of the body.—What harm did the jailer to Pharaoh's butler, when he opened the prison door to him, and let him out? Is the bird in worse case, when at liberty, than when confined in a cage? Thus, and no worse, are the souls of the saints treated by death. It comes to the godly man, as Haman came to Mordecai, with the royal apparel and the horse, Esther vi. 11, with commission to do them honour, however awkardly it be performed. I question not but Haman performed the ceremony with a very ill mien, a pale face, a downcast look, and a cloudy countenance, and like one who came to hang him, rather than to honour him. But he whom the king delighted to honour, must be honoured; and Haman, Mordecai's grand enemy, must be the man employed to put this honour upon him. Glory, glory, glory, blessing and praise to our Redeemer, our Saviour, our Mediator, by whose death, grim devouring death is made to do such a good office to those whom it might otherwise have hurried away in their wickedness, to utter and eternal destruction! A dying day is, in itself, a joyful day to the godly; it is their redemption day, when the captives are delivered, when the prisoners are set free. It is the day of the pilgrims coming home from their pilgrimage; the day in which the heirs of glory return from their travels, to their own country, and their Father's house; and enter into actual possession of the glorious inheritance. It is their marriage day: now is the time of espousals; but then the marriage is consummated, and a marriage feast begun, which has no end. If so, is not the state of the godly in death, a hopeful state?

Objection. "But if the state of the godly in their death be so hopeful, how comes it to pass that many of them, when dying, are full of

fears, and have little hope?" *Answer.* It must be owned, that saints do not all die in one and the same manner; there is a diversity among them, as well as among the wicked; yet the worst case of a dying saint is indeed a hopeful one. Some die triumphantly, in a full assurance of faith. 2 Timothy iv. 6—8, "The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." They get a taste of the joys of heaven, while here on earth; and begin the songs of Zion, while yet in a strange land. Others die in a solid dependence of faith on their Lord and Saviour: though they cannot sing triumphantly, yet they can, and will say confidently, "The Lord is their God." Though they cannot triumph over death, with old Simeon, having Christ in his arms, and saying, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation," Luke ii. 29, 30; yet they can say with dying Jacob, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord," Gen. xlix. 18. His left hand is under their head, to support them, though his right hand doth not embrace them: they firmly believe, though they are not filled with joy in believing. They can plead the covenant, and hang by the promise, although their house is not so with God as they could wish. But the dying day of some saints may be like that day mentioned in Zechariah xiv. 7, "Not day, nor night." They may die under great doubts and fears; setting as it were in a cloud, and going to heaven in a mist. They may go mourning without the sun, and never put off their spirit of heaven, till death stripes them of it. They may be carried to heaven through the confines of hell; and may be pursued by the devouring lion, even to the very gates of the new Jerusalem; and may be compared to a ship almost wrecked in sight of the harbour, which yet gets safe into her port, 1 Cor. iii. 15, "If any man's work shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire." There is safety amidst their fears, but danger in the strong confidence of the wicked; and there is a blessed seed of gladness in their greatest sorrows: "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart," Psalm xcvii. 11.

Now, saints are liable to such perplexity in their death, because, though they are Christians indeed, yet they are men of like passions with others; and death is a frightful object in itself, whatever dress it appears in: the stern countenance with which it looks at mortals, can hardly fail of causing them to shrink. Moreover, the saints are of all men the most jealous of themselves. They think of eternity, and of a tribunal, more deeply than others do; with them it is a

more serious thing to die, than the rest of mankind are aware of. They know the deceits of the heart, the subtleties of depraved human nature, better than others do. Therefore they may have much to do to keep up hope on a death-bed; while others pass off quietly, like sheep to the slaughter; and the rather, that Satan, who uses all his art to support the hopes of the hypocrite, will do his utmost to mar the peace, and increase the fears, of the saints. And finally, the bad frame of spirit, and ill condition, in which death sometimes seizes a true Christian, may cause this perplexity. By his being in the state of grace, he is indeed always habitually prepared for death, and his dying safely is ensured: but yet there is more necessary to his actual preparation and dying comfortably, his spirit must be in good condition too.

Wherefore there are three cases, in which death cannot but be very uncomfortable to a child of God. 1. If it seize him at a time when the guilt of some particular sin, unrepented of, is lying on his conscience: and death comes on that very account, to take him out of the land of the living; as was the case of many of the Corinthian professors, 1 Cor. xi. 30, "For this cause," namely, of unworthy communicating, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." If a person is surprised with the approach of death, while lying under the guilt of some unpardoned sin, it cannot but cause a mighty consternation. 2. When death catches him sleeping. The midnight cry must be frightful to sleeping virgins. The man who lies in a ruinous house, and awakes not till the timbers begin to crack, and the stones to drop down about his ears, may indeed get out of it safely, but not without fears of being crushed by its fall. When a Christian has been going on in a course of security and backsliding, and awakens not till death comes to his bedside, it is no wonder that he gets a fearful awakening. 3. When he has lost sight of his saving interest in Christ, and cannot produce evidences of his title to heaven. It is hard to meet death without some evidence of a title to eternal life at hand; hard to go through the dark valley without the candle of the Lord shinning upon the head. It is a terrible adventure to launch out into eternity, when a man can make no better of it than a leap in the dark, not knowing where he shall light, whether in heaven or hell.

Nevertheless the state of the saints, in their death, is always in itself hopeful. The presumptuous hopes of the ungodly, in their death, cannot make their state hopeful; neither can the fears of a saint make his state hopeless: for God judgeth according to the truth of the thing, not according to men's opinions about it. Therefore the saints can be no more altogether without hope, than they

can be altogether without faith. Their faith may be very weak, but it fails not; and their hope very low, yet they will, and do hope to the end. Even while the godly seem to be carried away with the stream of doubts and fears, there remains still as much hope as determines them to lay hold on the tree of life that grows on the banks of the river, Jonah ii. 4, "Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight: yet I will look again toward thy temple."

USE. This speaks comfort to the godly against the fear of death. A godly man may be called a happy man before his death, because, whatever befalls him in life, he shall certainly be happy at death. You who are in Christ, who are true Christians, have hope in your end; and such a hope as may comfort you against all those fears which arise from the consideration of a dying hour. This I shall branch out, in answering some cases briefly:

CASE 1. "The prospect of death," will some of the saints say, "is uneasy to me, not knowing what shall become of my family when I am gone." *Answer.* The righteous hath hope in his death, as to his family, as well as himself. Although you have little, for the present, to live upon; which has been the condition of many of God's chosen ones, 1 Cor. iv. 11, "We," namely, the apostles, "both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place;" and though you have nothing to leave them, as was the case of that son of the prophets, who feared the Lord, and yet died in debt which he was unable to pay, as his poor widow represents, 2 Kings iv. 2; yet you have a good Friend to leave them to; a covenant God, to whom you may confidently commit them, Jer. xlix. 11, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me." The world can bear witness of signal settlements made upon the children of providence; such as by their pious parents have been cast upon God's providential care. It has been often remarked, that they wanted neither provision nor education. Moses is an eminent instance of this. He, though he was an outcast infant, Exod. ii. 3, yet became learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Acts vii. 22, and became king in Jeshurun, Deut. xxxiii. 5. O! may we not be ashamed, that we do not confidently trust him with the concerns of our families, to whom, as our Saviour and Redeemer, we have committed our eternal interests?

CASE II. "Death will take us away from our dear friends; yea, we shall not see the Lord in the land of the living, in the blessed ordinances." *Answer.* It will take you to your best Friend, the Lord Christ. The friends you leave behind you, if they be indeed persons of worth, you will meet again, when they come to heaven:

and you will never be separated any more. If death take you away from the temple below, it will carry you to the temple above. It will indeed take you from the streams, but it will set you down by the fountain. If it put out your candle, it will carry you where there is no night, where there is an eternal day.

CASE III. "I have so much to do, in time of health, to satisfy myself as to my interest in Christ, about my being a real Christian, a regenerate man, that I judge it is almost impossible I should die comfortably." *Answer.* If it is thus with you, then double your diligence to make your calling and election sure. Endeavour to grow in knowledge, and walk closely with God: be diligent in self-examination; and pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit, whereby you may know the things freely given you of God. If you are enabled, by the power and Spirit of Christ, thus diligently to prosecute your spiritual concerns, though the time of your life be neither day nor night, yet at evening time it may be light. Many weak Christians indulge doubts and fears about their spiritual state, as if they placed at least some part of religion in this imprudent practice; but towards the end of life, they think and act in another manner. The traveller, who reckons that he has time to spare, may stand still debating with himself, whether this or the other be the right way: but when the sun begins to set, he is forced to lay aside his scruples, and resolutely to go forward in the road which he judges to be the right one, lest he lie all night in the open fields. Thus some Christians, who perplex themselves much, throughout the course of their lives, with jealous doubts and fears, content themselves when they come to die, with such evidences of the safety of their state, as they could not be satisfied with before; and by disputing less against themselves, and believing more, court the peace they formerly rejected, and gain it too.

CASE IV. "I am under a sad decay, in respect of my spiritual condition." *Answer.* Bodily consumptions may make death easy: but it is not so in spiritual decays. I will not say, that a godly man cannot be easy in such a case, when he dies, but I believe it is rarely so. Ordinarily, I suppose a cry comes to awaken sleeping virgins, before death comes. Samson is set to grind in the prison, till his locks grow again. David and Solomon fell under great spiritual decays; but before they died, they recovered their spiritual strength and vigour. However, bestir yourselves without delay, to strengthen the things that remain: your fright will be the less, for being awakened from spiritual sleep before death comes to your bedside: and you ought to lose no time, seeing you know not how soon death may seize you.

CASE V. "It is terrible to think of the other world, that world of spirits, which I have so little acquaintance with.—*Answer.* Thy best friend is Lord of that other world. Abraham's bosom is kindly even to those who never saw his face. After death, thy soul becomes capable of converse with the blessed inhabitants of that other world. The spirits of just men made perfect, were once such as thy spirit now is. And as for the angels, however superior their nature in the rank of beings, yet our nature is dignified above theirs, in the man Christ, and they are all of them thy Lord's servants, and so thy fellow-servants.

CASE VI. "The pangs of death are terrible." *Answer.* Yet not so terrible as pangs of conscience, caused by a piercing sense of guilt, and apprehensions of divine wrath, with which I suppose thee to be not altogether unacquainted. But who would not endure bodily sickness, that the soul may become sound, and every whit whole? Each pang of death will set sin a step nearer the door; and with the last breath, the body of sin will breathe out its last. The pains of death will not last long; and the Lord thy God will not leave, but support thee under them.

CASE VII. "But I am like to be cut off in the midst of my days." *Answer.* Do not complain, you will be the sooner at home: you thereby have the advantage of your fellow-labourers, who were at work before you in the vineyard. God, in the course of his providence, hides some of his saints early in the grave, that they may be taken away from the evil to come. An early removal out of this world, prevents sin and misery. They have no ground of complaint, who get the residue of their years in Immanuel's land. Surely thou shalt live as long as thou hast work cut out for thee by the great Master, to be done for him in this world: and when that is at an end, it is high time to be gone.

CASE VIII. "I am afraid of sudden death." *Answer.* Thou mayst indeed die so. Good Eli died suddenly, 1 Sam. iv. 18. Yet death found him watching, ver. 14: "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour the Lord doth come," Matt. xxiv. 42. Be not afraid, it is an inexpressible comfort, that death, come when it will, can never catch thee out of Christ; and therefore can never seize thee, as a jailor, to hurry thee into the prison of hell. Sudden death may hasten and facilitate thy passage to heaven, but can do thee no prejudice.

CASE IX. "I am afraid it will be my lot to die wanting the exercise of reason." *Answer.* I make no question but a child of God, a true Christian, may die in this case. But what harm? There is no hazard in it, as to his eternal state: a disease at death may divest him of his reason, but not of his religion. When a man, going a

long voyage, has put his affairs in order, and put all his goods aboard, he himself may be carried on board the ship sleeping: all is safe with him, although he knows not where he is, till he awake in the ship. Even so the godly man, who dies in this case, may die uncomfortably, but not unsafely.

Case X. "I am naturally timorous, and the very thoughts of death are terrible to me." *Answer*. The less you think on death, the thoughts of it will be the more frightful: make it familiar to you by frequent meditations upon it, and you may thereby quiet your fears. Look at the white and bright side of the cloud: take faith's view of the city that hath foundations: so shall you see hope in your death. Be duly affected with the body of sin and death, the frequent interruptions of your communion with God, and with the glory which dwells on the other side of death: this will contribute much to remove slavish fear.

It is a pity that saints should be so fond of life as they often are: they ought to be always on good terms with death. When matters are duly considered, it might be well expected that every child of God, every regenerate man, should generously profess concerning this life, what Job did, chap. vii. 16, "I loath it, I would not live always." In order to gain their hearts to this desirable temper, I offer the following additional considerations.

1. Consider the sinfulness that attends life in this world. While you live here, you sin, and see others sinning. You breathe infectious air. You live in a pest-house. Is it at all strange to loathe such a life? 1. Your own plague sores are running on you. Doth not the sin of your nature make you groan daily? Are you not sensible, that though the cure is begun, it is far from being perfected? Has not the leprosy got into the wall of the house, which cannot be removed without pulling it down? Is not your nature so vitiated, that no less than the separation of the soul from the body can root out the disease? Have you not your sores without, as well as your sickness within? Do you not leave marks of your pollution on whatever passes through your hands? Are not all your actions tainted and blemished with defects and imperfections? Who, then, should be so much in love with life, but such whose sickness is their health, and who glory in their shame? 2. The loathsome sores of others are always before your eyes, go where you will. The follies and wickedness of men are every where conspicuous, and make but an unpleasant scene. This sinful world is but an unsightly company, a disagreeable crowd, in which the most loathsome are the most numerous. 3. Are not your own sores often breaking out again after healing? Frequent relapses may well cause us remit of

our fondness for this life. To be ever struggling, and anon falling into the mire again, makes weary work. Do you never wish for cold death, thereby effectually to cool the heat of these lusts, which so often take fire again, even after a flood of godly sorrow has gone over them? Do not you sometimes infect others, and others infect you? There is no society in the world, in which every member of it doth not sometimes lay a stumbling-block before the rest. The best carry about with them the tinder of a corrupt nature, which they cannot be rid of while they live, and which is liable to be kindled at all times, and in all places: yea, they are apt to inflame others, and become the occasions of sinning. Certainly these things are apt to imbitter this life to the saints.

2. Consider the misery and troubles that attend it. Rest is desirable, but it is not to be found on this side of the grave. Worldly troubles attend all men in this life. This world is a sea of trouble, where one wave rolls upon another. They, who fancy themselves beyond the reach of trouble, are mistaken: no state, no change of life, is exempted from it. The crowned head is surrounded by thorny cares. Honour many times paves the way to deep disgrace: riches, for the most part, are kept to the hurt of the owners. The fairest rose wants not prickles; and the heaviest cross is sometimes wrapt up in the greatest earthly comfort. Spiritual troubles attend the saints in this life. They are like travellers journeying in a cloudy night, in which the moon sometimes breaks out from under one cloud, but quickly hides her head again under another: no wonder they long to be at their journey's end. The sudden alterations which the best frame of spirit is liable to, the perplexing doubts, confounding fears, short-lived joys, and long-running sorrows, which have a certain affinity with the present life, must needs create in the saints a desire to be with Christ, which is best of all.

3. Consider the great imperfections attending this life. While the soul is lodged in this cottage of clay, the necessities of the body are many: it is always craving. The mud walls must be repaired and patched up daily, till the clay cottage fall down for good and all. Eating, drinking, sleeping, and the like, are, in themselves, but mean employments for a rational creature; and will be reputed such by the heaven-born soul. They are badges of imperfection, and, as such, unpleasant to the mind aspiring unto that life and immortality which is brought to light through the gospel; and would be very grievous, if this state of things were of long continuance. Does not the gracious soul often find itself yoked with the body, as with a companion in travel, unable to keep pace with it? When the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. When the soul would mount up-

ward, the body is a clog upon it, and a stone tied to the foot of a bird attempting to fly. The truth is, O believer, thy soul in this body is, at best, but like a diamond in a ring, where much of it is obscured; it is far sunk in the vile clay, till relieved by death.

I conclude this subject with a few directions, how to prepare for death, so that we may die comfortably. I speak not here of habitual preparation for death, which a true Christian, in virtue of his gracious state, never wants, from the time he is born again, and united to Christ; but of actual preparation, or readiness in respect of his particular case, frame, and disposition of mind and spirit; the want of which makes even a saint very unfit to die.

First, Let it be your constant care to keep a clean conscience, "a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man," Acts xxiv. 16. Beware of a standing controversy between God and you, on the account of some iniquity regarded in the heart. When an honest man is about to leave his country, and not to return, he settles accounts with those he has had dealings with, and lays down methods for paying his debts in due time, lest he be reckoned a bankrupt, and attacked by an officer when he is going off. Guilt lying on the conscience, is a fountain of fears, and will readily sting severely, when death stares the criminal in the face. Hence it is, that many, even of God's children, when dying, wish passionately, and desire eagerly, that they may live to do what they ought to have done before that time. Wherefore, walk closely with God; be diligent, strict, and exact in your course: beware of loose, careless, and irregular conversation; as you would not lay up for yourselves anguish and bitterness of spirit, in a dying hour. And because, through the infirmity cleaving to us, in our present state of imperfection, in many things we offend all, renew your repentance daily, and be ever washing in the Redeemer's blood. As long as you are in the world, you will need to wash your feet, John xiii. 10, that is, to make application of the blood of Christ anew, for purging your consciences from the guilt of daily miscarriages. Let death find you at the fountain; and, if so, it will find you ready to answer at its call.

Secondly, Be always watchful, waiting for your change, "like unto men that wait for their Lord—that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately," Luke xii. 36. Beware of "slumbering and sleeping, while the bridegroom tarries." To be awakened out of spiritual slumber, by a surprising call to pass into another world, is a very frightful thing: but he who is daily waiting for the coming of his Lord, will comfortably receive the grim messenger, while he beholds him ushering in Him, of whom he may

confidently say, "This is my God, and I have waited for him." The way to die comfortably, is, to die daily. Be often essaying, as it were, to die. Bring yourselves familiarly acquainted with death, by making many visits to the grave, in serious meditations upon it. This was Job's practice, chap. xvii. 13, 14, "I have made my bed in the darkness." Go thou and do likewise; and when death comes, thou shalt have nothing to do but to lie down. "I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister." Do you say so too; and you will be the fitter to go home to their house. Be frequently reflecting upon your conduct, and considering what course of life you wish to be found in, when death arrests you; and act accordingly. When you do the duties of your station in life, or are employed in acts of worship, think with yourselves, that, it may be, this is the last opportunity; and therefore do it as if you were never to do more of that kind. When you lie down at night, compose your spirits, as if you were not to awake till the heavens be no more. And when you awake in the morning, consider that new day as your last; and live accordingly. Surely that night cometh, of which you will never see the morning; or that morning, of which you will never see the night. But which of your mornings or nights will be such, you know not.

Thirdly, Employ yourselves much in weaning your hearts from the world. The man who is making ready to go abroad, busies himself in taking leave of his friends. Let the mantle of earthly enjoyments hang loose about you; that it may be easily dropped, when death comes to carry you away into another world. Moderate your affections towards your lawful comforts of life: let not your hearts be too much taken with them. The traveller acts unwisely, who suffers himself to be so allured with the conveniences of the inn where he lodges, as to make his necessary departure from it grievous. Feed with fear, and walk through the world as pilgrims and strangers. The same [illegible], when the corn is forsaking the ground, it is ready for the sickle; when the fruit is ripe, it falls off the tree easily; so, when a Christian's heart is truly weaned from the world, he is prepared for death, and it will be the more easy to him. A heart disengaged from the world is a heavenly one: we are ready for heaven when our heart is there before us, Matt. vi. 21.

Fourthly, Be diligent in gathering and laying up evidences of your title to heaven, for your support and comfort at the hour of death. The neglect hereof mars the joy and consolation which some Christians might otherwise have at their death. Wherefore, examine yourselves frequently as to your spiritual state; that evidences which lie hid and unobserved, may be brought to light and

taken notice of. And if you would manage this work successfully, make solemn, serious work of it. Set apart some time for it. And, after earnest prayer to God, through Jesus Christ, for the enlightening influences of his Holy Spirit, whereby you are enabled to understand his own word, and to discern his own work in your souls; examine yourselves before the tribunal of your own consciences, that you may judge yourselves, in this weighty matter.

And, in the first place, let the marks of a regenerate state be fixed from the Lord's word: have recourse to some particular text for that purpose; such as Prov. viii. 17, "I love them that love me." Compare Luke xiv. 26, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Psalm cxix. 6, "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." Psalm xviii. 23, "I was also upright before him; and I kept myself from mine iniquity." Compare Rom. vii. 22, 23, "For I delight in the law of God, after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind." 1 John iii. 3, "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Matt. v. 3, "Blessed are the pure in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Phil. iii. 3, "For we are the circumcision, which worship," or serve "God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." The sum of the evidence arising from these texts, lies here: a real Christian is one who loves God for himself, as well as for his benefits; and that with a supreme love, above all persons, and all things; he has an awful and impartial regard to God's commands; he opposes and wrestles against that sin, which of all others most easily besets him: he approves and loves the holy law, even in that very point wherein it strikes against his own beloved lust; his hope of heaven engages him to the study of universal holiness; in which he aims at perfection, though he cannot reach it in this life; he serves the Lord, not only in acts of worship, but in the whole of his conversation, and as to both, is spiritual in the principle, motives, aims, and ends of his service; yet he sees nothing in himself to trust to, before the Lord; Christ and his fulness are the stay of his soul; his confidence is cut off from all that is not Christ, or in Christ, in point of justification or acceptance with God, and in point of sanctification too. Every one, in whom these characters are found, has a title to heaven, according to the word. It is convenient and profitable to mark such texts, for this special use, as they occur, while you read the Scriptures, or hear sermons. The marks of a regenerate state thus fixed, in the next place impartially

search and try your own hearts thereby, as in the sight of God, with dependence on him for spiritual discernment, that you may know whether they be in you or not. When you find them, form the conclusion deliberately and distinctly; namely, that therefore you are regenerated, and have a title to heaven." Thus you may gather evidences. But be sure to have recourse to God in Christ, by earnest prayer, for the testimony of the Spirit, whose office it is to "bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," Rom. viii. 16. Moreover, carefully observe the course and method of providence towards you; and likewise, how your soul is affected under the same, in the various steps thereof: compare both with Scripture doctrines, promises, threatenings, and examples: so shall you perceive if the Lord deals with you as he uses to do unto those that love his name, and if you are going forth by the footsteps of the flock. This may afford you comfortable evidence. Walk tenderly and circumspectly, and the Lord will manifest himself to you, according to his promise, John xiv. 21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." But it is in vain to think of successful self-examination, if you be loose and irregular in your conversation.

Lastly, Despatch the work of your day and generation with speed and diligence. "David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep" Acts xiii. 36. God has allotted us certain pieces of work of this kind, which ought to be despatched before the time of working be over, Eccl. ix. 10, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Gal. vi. 10, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." If a passenger, after he is got on shipboard, and the ship is getting under sail, remember that he has omitted to despatch a piece of necessary business when he was ashore, it must needs be uneasy to him: even so, reflection in a dying hour upon neglected seasons, and lost opportunities, cannot fail to disquiet a Christian. Wherefore, whatever is incumbent upon thee to do for God's honour, and the good of others, either as the duty of thy station, or by special opportunity put into thy hand, perform it seasonably, if thou wouldst die comfortably.

PART III.

OF THE RESURRECTION.

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.—JOHN v. 28, 29.

THESE words are part of the defence which our Lord Jesus Christ makes for himself, when persecuted by the Jews, for curing the impotent man and ordering him to carry away his bed on the Sabbath; and for vindicating his conduct, when accused by them of having thereby profaned that day. On this occasion he professes himself not only the Lord of the Sabbath, but also Lord of life and death; declaring, in the words of the text, the resurrection of the dead to be brought to pass by his power. This he introduces with these words, as with a solemn preface, "Marvel not at this," namely, at this strange discourse of mine: do not wonder to hear me, whose appearance is so very mean in your eyes, talk at this rate; for the day is coming, in which the dead shall be raised by my power.

Observe in this text, 1. The doctrine of the resurrection asserted, "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." The dead bodies, which are reduced to dust, shall revive, and evidence life by hearing and moving. 2. The author of it, Jesus Christ, "the Son of man," ver. 27. The dead shall hear his voice, and be raised thereby. 3. The number that shall be raised, "All that are in the graves," that is, all the dead bodies of men, howsoever differently disposed of, in different kinds of graves; or all the dead, good and bad. They are not all buried in graves, properly so called: some are burnt to ashes: some drowned, and buried in the bellies of fishes; but, wherever the matter or substance of which the body was composed is to be found, thence they shall come forth. 4. The great distinction that shall be made between the godly and the wicked: they shall both rise again in the resurrection. None of the godly shall be missing; though, perhaps, they either had no burial, or a very obscure one; and all the wicked shall come forth; their vaulted tombs shall hold them no longer than the voice is uttered. But the former have a joyful resurrection to life, whilst the latter have a dreadful resurrection to damnation. 5. The set time of this great event: there is an hour, or certain fixed period of time, appointed of God for it. We are not told

when that hour will be, but that it is coming; for this, among other reasons, that we may always be ready.

Doctrine. There shall be a resurrection of the dead. In discoursing of this subject, I shall—1. Shew the certainty of the resurrection. II. I shall inquire into the nature of it. And, *Lastly*, make some practical improvement of the whole.

I. In shewing the certainty of the resurrection, I shall evince, 1. That God can raise the dead. 2. That he will do it; which are the two grounds or topics laid down by Christ himself, when disputing with the Sadducees, Matt. xxii. 29, "Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God."

I. Seeing God is almighty, surely he can raise the dead. We have instances of this powerful work of God, both in the Old and New Testament. The son of the widow in Sarepta was raised from the dead, 1 Kings xvii. 22; the Shunammite's son, 2 Kings iv. 35; and the man "cast into the sepulchre of Elisha," chap. xiii. 21. In which we may observe a gradation, the second of these miraculous events being more illustrious than the first, and the third than the second. The first of these persons was raised when he was but newly dead; the prophet Elijah, who raised him being present at his decease. The second, when he had lain dead a considerable time; namely, while his mother travelled from Shunem, to mount Carmel, reckoned about the distance of sixteen miles, and returned from thence to her house, with Elisha, who raised him. The last, not till they were burying him, and the corpse was cast into the prophet's grave. In like manner, in the New Testament, Jairus's daughter, Mark v. 41, and Dorcas, Acts ix. 40, were both raised to life, when lately dead; the widow's son in Nain, when they were carrying him out to bury him, Luke vii. 11—15; and Lazarus, when putrid in the grave, John xi. 39—44.

Can men make curious glasses out of ashes, and cannot the great Creator, who made all things of nothing, raise man's body, after it is reduced into the dust? If it be objected, "How can men's bodies be raised up again, after they are reduced to dust, and the ashes of many generations are mingled together?" Scripture and reason furnish the answer, "With men it is impossible, but not with God." It is absurd for men to deny that God can do a thing, because they see not how it may be done. How small a portion do we know of his ways! How absolutely incapable are we of conceiving distinctly of the extent of almighty power, and much more of comprehending its actings, and method of procedure! I question not, but many illiterate men are as great unbelievers as to many chemical experiments, as some learned men are to the doctrine of the resur-

rection: and as these last are ready to deride the former, so, "the Lord will have them in derision." What a mystery was it to the Indians, that the Europeans could, by a piece of paper, converse together at the distance of some hundreds of miles! How much were they astonished to see them, with their guns, produce as it were thunder and lightning in a moment, and at pleasure kill men afar off! Shall some men do such things as are wonders in the eyes of others because they cannot comprehend them, and shall men confine the infinite power of God within the narrow boundaries of their own shallow capacities, in a matter no ways contrary to reason! An inferior nature has but a very imperfect conception of the power of a superior. Brutes do not conceive of the actings of reason in men; and men have but imperfect notions of the power of angels: how low and inadequate a conception, then, must a finite nature have of the power of that which is infinite! Though we cannot conceive how God acts, yet we ought to believe he can do above what we can think or conceive.

Wherefore, let the bodies of men be laid in the grave; let them rot there, and be reduced into the most minute particles: or let them be burnt, and the ashes cast into rivers, or thrown up into the air, to be scattered by the wind: let the dust of a thousand generations be mingled, and the steams of the dead bodies wander to and fro in the air: let birds or wild beasts eat the bodies, or the fishes of the sea devour them, so that the parts of human bodies, thus destroyed, pass into substantial parts of birds, beasts or fishes; and then let our modern Sadducees propose the questions in these cases, as the ancient Sadducees did in the case of the woman who had been married to seven husbands successively, Matt. xxii. 28. We answer, as our blessed Lord and Saviour did, ver. 29, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." We believe God to be omniscient and omnipotent; infinite in knowledge and in power: and hence, agreeably to the dictates of reason, we conclude the possibility of the resurrection, even in the cases supposed.

Material things may change their forms and shapes, may be reduced to the principles of which they are formed: but they are not annihilated, or reduced to nothing; nor can they be so, by any created power. God is omniscient, his understanding is infinite; therefore he knows all things; what they were at any time, what they are, and where they are to be found. Though the countryman, who comes into the apothecary's shop, cannot find out the drug he wants; yet the apothecary himself knows what he has in his shop, whence it came, and where it is to be found. And, in a mixture of

many different seeds, the expert gardener can distinguish between each of them. Why then may not Omniscience distinguish between dust and dust? Can he, who knows all things to perfection, be liable to any mistake about his own creatures? Whoso believes an infinite understanding, must needs own, that no mass of dust is so jumbled together, but God perfectly comprehends, and infallibly knows, how the most minute particle, and every one of them is to be matched. Therefore he knows where the particles of each dead body are; whether in the earth, sea, or air, however they are now scattered.—It is certain the bodies of men, as of all other animals or living creatures, are in a continual change: they grow and are sustained by daily food; so small a part whereof becomes nourishment, that the most part evaporates. It is reckoned that much of the food evaporates insensibly by perspiration. Yea, the nourishing part of the food, when assimilated, and thereby become a part of the body, evaporates by perspiration, though the pores of the skin, and is again supplied by the use of other food: yet the body is still reckoned one and the same body. Whence we may conclude, that it is not essential to the resurrection of the body, that every particle of the matter, which at any time was part of a human body, should be restored to it, when it is raised up from death to life. Were it so, the bodies of men would become of so huge a size, that they would bear no resemblance to the persons. It is sufficient to denominate it the same body that died, when it is risen again, if the body that is raised be formed in its former proportions, of the same particles of matter, which at any time were its constituent parts, however it be refined: just as we reckon it is the same body that has pined away by long sickness, which becomes fat and fair again after recovery.

Now, to this infinite understanding join infinite power, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself; and this gloriously great work appears most reasonable. If Omniscience discover every little particle of dust, where it is, and how it is to be matched, cannot Omnipotence bring them, and join them together, in their order? Can the watchmaker take up the several pieces of a watch, lying in a confused heap before him, and set each in its proper place; and cannot God put the human body into order, after its dissolution? Did he speak his world into being, out of nothing: and can he not form man's body out of its pre-existent matter? If he calleth those things which be not, as though they were, surely he can call things that are dissolved, to be as they were before the componud was resolved into its parts and principles. Wherefore, God can raise the dead. And "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Acts xxvi. 8.

2. God will do it. He not only can do it, but he certainly will do it, because he has said it. Our text is very full to this purpose, "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." These words relate to, and are an explanation of, that part of Daniel's prophecy, Dan. xii. 2, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Which appears to be calculated to confront the doctrine of the Sadducees; which the Holy Ghost knew was to be at a great height in the Jewish church, under the persecution of Antiochus.—There are many other texts in the Old and New Testament, that might here be adduced; such as Acts xxiv. 15, "And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." And Job xix. 26, 27, "Though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." But I need not multiply testimonies, in a matter so clearly and frequently taught in sacred Scripture. Our Lord and Saviour himself proves it, against the Sadducees, in that remarkable text, Luke xx. 37, 38, "Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; for he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him."—These holy patriarchs were dead; nevertheless, the Lord JEHOVAH is called their God, namely, in virtue of the covenant of grace, and in the sense thereof; in which sense the phrase comprehends all blessedness, as that which, by the covenant, is secured to those who are in it; Heb. xi. 16, "God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he has prepared for them a city." He is not called the God of their souls only; but their God, the God of their persons, souls, and bodies; which, by virtue of his truth and faithfulness, must have its full effect: now, it cannot have its full effect on the dead, who, inasmuch as they are dead, are far from all blessedness; but on the living, who alone are capable of it. Therefore, since God is still called their God, they are living in respect of God,* although their bodies are yet in the grave; for, in respect of him, who by his power can restore them to life, and in his covenant has declared his will and purpose so to do, and whose promise

* Their souls are actually so, and enjoy communion with him, and with saints and angels.

cannot fail, they are all to be reckoned to live; and, consistent with the covenant, their death is but a sleep, out of which, in virtue of the said covenant, securing all blessedness to their persons, their whole man, they must and shall certainly be awakened. The apostle Paul proves the resurrection at large, 1 Cor. chap. xv., and shows it to be a fundamental article, the denial whereof is subversive of Christianity, ver. 13, 14, "If there be no resurrection of the dead then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

To assist us in conceiving of it, the Scripture gives us types of the resurrection of the dead; as the dry bones living, Ezek. chap. xxxvii; Jonah's coming out of the whale's belly, Matt. xii. 40. And nature affords us emblems and resemblances of it; as the sun's setting and rising again, night and day, winter and summer, sleeping and waking; swallows in winter lying without any appearance of life, in ruinous buildings and subterraneous caverns, and reviving again in the spring season; the seed dying under the clod, and springing up again: all which, and the like, may justly be admitted as designed by the God of nature, though not for proofs, yet for memorials of the resurrection; whereof we have assurance from the Scripture, 1 Cor. xv. 36, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die."

II. I shall inquire into the nature of the resurrection, shewing, 1. Who shall be raised? 2. What shall be raised. 3. How the dead shall be raised.

1. Who shall be raised? Our text tells us who they are; namely "all that are in the graves," that is, all mankind who are dead. As for those persons who are found alive at the second coming of Christ, they shall not die, and soon after be raised again; but such a change shall suddenly pass upon them as shall be to them instead of dying and rising again; so that their bodies shall become like to those bodies which are raised out of their graves, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed: in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." Hence those that are to be judged at the great day, are distinguished into *quick* and *dead*, Acts x. 42. All the dead shall arise, whether godly or wicked, just or unjust, Acts xxiv. 15, old or young; the whole race of mankind, even those who never saw the sun, Rev. xx. 12, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." The sea and earth shall give up their dead without reserve, none shall be kept back.

2: What shall be raised? The bodies of mankind. A man is said to die, when the soul is separated from the body, "and returns unto God who gave it," Eccl. xii. 7. But it is the body only which

is laid in the grave, and can be properly said to be raised: wherefore the resurrection, strictly speaking, applies to the body only. Moreover, it is the same body that dies, which shall rise again. At the resurrection, men shall not appear with other bodies, as to substance, than those which they now have, and which are laid down in the grave; but with the self-same bodies, endowed with other qualities. The very notion of a resurrection implies this, since nothing can be said to rise again, but that which falls. But to illustrate it a little, 1. It is plain from Scripture testimony. The apostle asserts, that it is "this mortal" which "must put on immortality," 1 Cor. xv. 53; and that Christ "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," Phil. iii. 21. Death, in Scripture language, is a sleep, and the resurrection an awaking out of that sleep, Job xiv. 12; which shews the body rising up, to be the self-same that died. 2. The equity of the divine procedure, both with respect to the godly and the wicked, proves this. It is not reckoned equal among men, that one do the work, and another get the reward. Though the glorifying of the bodies of the saints is not, properly speaking, and in a strict sense, the reward of their services or sufferings on earth; yet this is evident, that it is not at all agreeable to the manner of the divine dispensation, that one body should serve him, and another be glorified; that one should fight, and another receive the crown. How can it be imagined, that "the temples of the Holy Ghost," as the bodies of believers are termed, 1 Cor. vi. 19, should always lie in rubbish, and others be reared up in their stead? that the members of Christ, ver. 15, should perish utterly, and other bodies come in their room? Nay, surely, as the bodies of the saints now bear a part in glorifying God, and some of them suffer in his cause, so they shall partake of the glory that is to be revealed. And these bodies of the wicked, which are laid in the dust, shall be raised again, that the same body which sinned may suffer. Shall one body sin here, and another suffer in hell for that sin? Shall that body which was the soul's companion in sin, lie for ever hid in the dust; and another body which did not act any part in sinning, be its companion in torment? No, no; it is that body which now takes up all their thoughts to provide for its back and belly, that shall be raised up, to suffer in hell. It is that tongue, which is now the swearing, lying tongue, that will need water to cool it, in eternal flames. The same feet that now stand in the way of sinners, and carry men in their ungodly courses, shall stand in the burning lake. And the same covetous and lascivious eyes shall receive the fire and smoke of the pit.

3. How shall the dead be raised? The same Jesus, who was crucified within the gates of Jerusalem, shall, at the last day, to the conviction of all, be declared both Lord and Christ: appearing as Judge of the world, attended with his mighty angels, 2 Thess. i. 7, "He shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," 1 Thess. iv. 16, "The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and those who are alive, changed," 1 Cor. xv. 52. Whether this shout, voice, and trumpet, denote some audible voice, or only the workings of Divine power, for the raising of the dead, and other awful purposes of that day, though the former seems probable, I will not positively determine. There is no question but this coming of the Judge of the world will be in greater majesty and terror than we can conceive: yet that awful grandeur, majesty, and state, which was displayed at the giving of the law, namely, thunders heard, lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount seen, the Lord descending in fire, the whole mount quaking greatly, and the voice of the trumpet waxing louder and louder, Exod. xix. 16—19, may help us to form a becoming thought of it. However, the sound of this trumpet shall be heard all the world over; it shall reach to the depths of the sea, and of the earth. At this loud alarm, bones shall come together, bone to his bone: the scattered dust of all the dead shall be gathered together, dust to his dust; "neither shall one thrust another, they shall walk every one in his path;" and, meeting together again, shall make up that very same body which crumbled into dust in the grave. At the same alarming voice shall every soul come into its own body, never more to be separated. The dead can stay no longer in their graves, but must bid an eternal farewell to their long homes: they hear His voice, and must come forth, and receive their final sentence.

Now as there is a great difference between the godly and the wicked, in their life, and in their death; so will there be also in their resurrection.

The godly shall be raised out of their graves, by virtue of the Spirit of Christ, the blessed bond of their union with him, Rom. viii. 11, "He that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." Jesus Christ arose from the dead, as the "first-fruits of them that slept," 1 Cor. xv. 20, So they that are Christ's shall follow at his coming, ver. 23. The mystical head having got above the waters of death, he cannot but bring forth the members after him, in due time.

They shall come forth with inexpressible joy; for then shall that passage of Scripture, which, in its immediate scope, respected the

Babylonish captivity, be fully accomplished in its most extensive meaning, Isa. xxvi. 19, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust." As a bride adorned for her husband, goes forth of her bedchamber unto the marriage: so shall the saints go forth of their graves, unto the marriage of the Lamb. Joseph had a joyful coming out from the prison, Daniel from the lion's den, and Jonah from the whale's belly: yet these are but faint representations of the saint's coming forth from the grave, at the resurrection. Then shall they sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb, in highest strains; death being quite swallowed up in victory. They had, while in this life, sometimes sung, by faith the triumphant song over death and the grave, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory?" 1 Cor. xv. 55. But then they sing the same, from sight and sense; the black band of doubts and fears, which frequently disturbed them, and disquieted their minds, is for ever dispersed and driven away.

May we not suppose the soul and body of every saint, as in mutual embraces, to rejoice in each other, and triumph in their happy meeting again; and the body to address the soul thus? "O my soul, have we got together again, after so long a separation! art thou come back to thine old habitation, never more to remove! O joyful meeting! how unlike is our present state to what our case was, when a separation was made between us at death! Now is our mourning turned into joy; the light and gladness sown before, are now sprung up; and there is a perpetual spring in Immanuel's land. Blessed be the day in which I was united to thee; whose chief care was to get Christ in us the hope of glory, and to make me a temple for his Holy Spirit. O blessed soul, which in the time of our pilgrimage, kept thine eye to the land then afar off, but now near at hand! thou tookest me into secret places, and there madest me to bow these knees before the Lord, that I might bear a part in our humiliation before him: and now is the time that I am lifted up. Thou didst employ this tongue in confessions, petitions, and thanksgivings, which henceforth shall be employed in praising for evermore. Thou madest these sometimes weeping eyes, sow that seed of tears, which is now sprung up in joy that shall never end. I was happily beat down by thee, and kept in subjection, while others pampered their flesh, and made their bellies their gods, to their own destruction: but now I gloriously arise, to take my place in the mansions of glory, whilst they are dragged out of their graves to be cast into fiery flames. Now, my soul, thou shalt complain no more of a sick and pained body; thou shalt be no more clogged with weak and weary flesh; I shall now keep pace with thee in the praises of our God for evermore." And may not the soul say, "O

happy day in which I return to dwell in that blessed body, which was, and is, and will be for ever, a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Spirit! Now I shall be eternally knit to thee: the silver cord shall never be loosed more: death shall never make another separation between us. Arise then, my body, and come away! and let these eyes, which were wont to weep over my sins, behold with joy the face of our glorious Redeemer; lo! this is our God, and we have waited for him. Let these ears, which were wont to hear the word of life in the temple below, come and hear the hallelujahs in the temple above. Let these feet, that carried me to the congregation of saints on earth, take their place among those in heaven. And let this tongue, which confessed Christ before men, and used to be still dropping something to his commendation, join the choir of the upper house, in his praises for evermore. Thou shalt fast no more, but keep an everlasting feast; thou shalt weep no more, neither shall thy countenance be overclouded; but thou shalt shine for ever, as a star in the firmament. We took part together in the fight, come, let us go together to receive and wear the crown."

But on the other hand, the wicked shall be raised by the power of Christ, as a just Judge, who is to render vengeance to his enemies. The same divine power which shut up their souls in hell, and kept their bodies in the grave, as in a prison, shall bring them forth, that soul and body together may receive the dreadful sentence of eternal damnation, and be shut up together in the prison of hell.

They shall come forth from their graves with unspeakable horror and consternation. They shall be dragged forth, as so many malefactors out of a dungeon, to be led to execution; crying to the mountains and to the rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb. Fearful was the cry in Egypt, the night on which the destroying angel went through, and slew their first-born. Dreadful were the shouts, at the earth opening her mouth, and swallowing up Dathan and Abiram, and all that appertained to them. What hideous crying then must there be, when at the sound of the last trumpet, the earth and sea shall open their mouths, and cast forth all the wicked world, delivering them up to the dreadful Judge! How will they cry, roar, and tear themselves! How will the jovial companions weep and howl, and curse one another! How will the earth be filled with their doleful shrieks and lamentations, while they are pulled out like sheep for the slaughter! They who, while they lived in this world, were profane, debauchees, covetous worldlings, or formal hypocrites, shall then, in anguish of mind, wring their hands, beat their breasts, and bitterly lament

their case, roaring forth their complaints, and calling themselves beasts, fools, and madmen, for having acted so mad a part in this life, in not believing what they then heard. They were driven away in their wickedness, at death: and now all their sins rise with them; and, like so many serpents, twist themselves about their wretched souls, and bodies too, which have a frightful meeting, after a long separation.

Then we may suppose the miserable body thus to accost the soul, "Hast thou again found me, O mine enemy, my worst enemy, savage soul, more cruel than a thousand tigers. Cursed be the day that ever we met. O that I had never received sense, life, and motion! O that I had rather been the body of a toad, or serpent, than thy body; for then had I lain still, and had not seen this terrible day; If I was to be necessarily thine, O that I had been thy ass, or one of thy dogs, rather than thy body; for then wouldst thou have taken more true care of me than thou didst! O cruel kindness! hast thou thus hugged me to death, thus nourished me to the slaughter? Is this the effect of thy tenderness for me? Is this what I am to reap of thy pains and concern about me? What do riches and pleasures avail now, when this fearful reckoning is come! of which thou hadst fair warning? O cruel grave! why didst thou not close thy mouth upon me for ever? Why didst thou not hold fast thy prisoner? Why hast thou shaken me out, while I lay still and was at rest? Cursed soul, wherefore didst thou not abide in thy place, wrapped up in flames of fire? Wherefore art thou come back, to take me also down to the bars of the pit? Thou madest me an instrument of unrighteousness; and now I must be thrown into the fire. This tongue was by thee employed in mocking at religion, cursing, swearing, lying, backbiting, and boasting; and withheld from glorifying God: and now it must not have so much as a drop of water to cool it in the flames. Thou didst withdraw mine ears from hearing the sermons which gave warning of this day Thou foundest ways and means to stop them from attending to seasonable exhortations, admonitions, and reproofs. But why didst thou not stop them from hearing the sound of this dreadful trumpet? Why dost thou not rove and fly away on the wings of imagination, thereby, as it were, transporting me during these frightful transactions; as thou wast wont to do, when I was set down at sermons, communions, prayers, and godly conferences; that I might now have as little sense of the one, as I formerly had of the other? But ah! I must burn for ever, for thy love to thy lusts, thy profanity, thy sensuality, thy unbelief, and hypocrisy." But may not the soul answer—"Wretched and vile carcase! I am now driven back into

thee. O that thou hadst lain for ever in thy grave! Had I not torment enough before? Must I be knit to thee again, that, being joined together as two dry sticks for the fire, the wrath of God may burn us up? It was by caring for you, that I lost myself. It was your back and your belly, and the gratifying of your senses, which ruined me. How often was I ensnared by your ears! how often betrayed by your eyes! It was to spare you, that I neglected opportunities of making peace with God, loitered away Sabbaths, lived in the neglect of prayer; went to the house of mirth, rather than to the house of mourning; and that I chose to deny Christ, and forsake his cause and interest in the world; and so am fallen a sacrifice to your cursed ease. When at any time my conscience began to awake, and I was setting myself to think of my sins, and the misery which I have felt since we parted, and now feel, it was you that diverted me from these thoughts, and drew me off to make provision for you. O wretched flesh! by your silken cords of fleshly lusts, I was drawn to destruction, in defiance of my light and conscience: but now they are turned into iron chains, with which I am to be held under wrath for evermore. Ah wretched profits! ah cursed pleasures! for which I must lie for ever in utter darkness!"—But no complaints will then avail. O that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!

As to the qualities with which the bodies of the saints shall be endowed at the resurrection, the apostle tells us, they shall be raised incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual, 1 Cor. xv. 42—44, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

1. The bodies of the saints shall be raised incorruptible. They are now, as the bodies of others, a mass of corruption, full of the seeds of diseases and death; and, when dead, become so offensive, even to their dearest friends, that they must be buried out of their sight, and cast into the grave: yea, loathsome sores and diseases make some of them very unsightly, even while alive. But, at the resurrection, they leave all the seeds of corruption behind them in the grave; and rise incorruptible, incapable of the least indisposition, sickness, or sore, and much more, of dying. External violences and inward causes of pain, shall for ever cease: they shall feel it no more: yea, they shall have an everlasting youth and vigour, being no more subject to the decays which age produced in this life.

2. They shall be glorious bodies; not only beautiful, comely, and

well-proportioned, but full of splendour and brightness. The most beautiful face, and best proportioned body, that now appears in the world, is not to be named in comparison with the body of the meanest saint at the resurrection; for "then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun," Matt. xiii. 43. If there was a dazzling glory on Moses' face, when he came down from the mount; and if Stephen's face was "as it had been the face of an angel," when he stood before the council; how much more shall the faces of the saints be beautiful and glorious, full of sweet agreeable majesty, when they have put off all corruption, and shine as the sun! But observe, this beauty of the saints is not restricted to their faces, but diffuses itself through their whole bodies: for the whole body is raised in glory, and shall be fashioned like unto their Lord and Saviour's glorious body, in whose transfiguration, not only did his face shine as the sun, but his raiment also was white as the light, Matt. xvii. 2. Whatever defects or deformities the bodies of the saints had when laid in the grave, occasioned by accidents in life, or arising from secret causes in their formation, they shall rise out of the grave free of all these. But suppose the marks of the Lord Jesus, the scars or prints of the wounds and bruises which some of the saints received while on earth, for his sake, should remain in their bodies after the resurrection; the same as the print of the nails remained in the Lord Jesus' body after his resurrection: these marks will rather be badges of distinction, and add to their glory, than detract from their beauty. But however that be, surely Isaac's eyes shall not then be dim, nor will Jacob halt: Leah shall not be tender-eyed, nor Mephibosheth lame of his legs. For as the goldsmith melts down the old crazy vessel, and casts it over again in a new mould, bringing it forth with a new lustre; so shall the vile body, which lay dissolved in the grave, come forth at the resurrection, in perfect beauty and comely proportion.

3. They shall be powerful and strong bodies. The strongest men on earth, being frail and mortal, may justly be reckoned weak and feeble; for their strength, however great, is quickly worn out and consumed. Many of the saints now have weaker bodies than others; but "the feeble among them," to allude to Zechariah xii. 8, at that day shall be "as David, and the house of David shall be as God." A grave divine says, That one shall be stronger at the resurrection than a hundred, yea, than thousands are now. Certainly great, and vastly great, must the strength of glorified bodies be; for they shall bear up under an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The mortal body is not at all adapted to such a state. Do transports of joy occasion death, as well as excessive grief, and can it bear up

under a weight of glory? Can it subsist in union with a soul filled with heaven's rapture? Surely not. The mortal body would sink under that load, and such fulness of joy would make the earthen pitcher to fly all in pieces.

The Scripture has plainly told us, "That flesh and blood," namely, in their present frail state, though it were the flesh and blood of a giant, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God," 1 Cor. xv. 50. How strong must the bodily eyes be, which, to the soul's eternal comfort, shall behold the dazzling glory and splendour of the New Jerusalem; and steadfastly look at the transcendent glory and brightness of the man Christ, the Lamb, who is the light of that city, the inhabitants whereof shall shine as the sun! The Lord of heaven doth now in mercy "hold back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it;" that mortals may not be confounded with the rays of glory which shine forth from it, Job xxvi. 9. But then the veil shall be removed, and they made able to behold it, to their unspeakable joy. How strong must their bodies be, who shall not rest night nor day, but be, without intermission, for ever employed in the heavenly temple, to sing and proclaim the praises of God without weariness, which is a weakness incident to the frail mortal, but not to the glorified body!

4. They shall be spiritual bodies. Not that they shall be changed into spirits, but they shall be spiritual as to their spirit-like qualities and endowments. The body shall be absolutely subservient to the soul, subject to it, and influenced by it, and therefore no more a clog to its activity, nor the animal appetites a snare to it. There will be no need to beat it down, nor to drag it to the service of God. The soul, in this life is so much influenced by the body, that, in Scripture style, it is said to be carnal; but then the body shall be spiritual, readily serving the soul in the business of heaven, and in that only, as if it had no more relation to earth than a spirit. It will have no further need of the now necessary supports of life, namely, food, and raiment, and the like. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more," Rev. vii. 16. "For in the resurrection, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Then shall the saints be strong without meat or drink, warm without clothes, ever in perfect health without medicine, and ever fresh and vigorous, though they shall never sleep, but serve him night and day in his temple, Rev. vii. 15. They will need none of these things, any more than spirits do. They will be nimble and active as spirits, and of a most refined constitution. The body, that is now lumpish and heavy, shall then be most sprightly. No such thing as melancholy shall be found to

make the heart heavy, and the spirits flag and sink. I shall not further dip into this matter: the day will declare it.

As to the qualities of the bodies of the wicked at the resurrection, I find the Scripture speaks but little of them. Whatever they may need, they shall not get a drop of water to cool their tongues, Luke xvi. 24, 25, Whatever may be said of their weakness, it is certain they will be continued for ever in life, that they may be ever dying; they shall bear up, however unwillingly under the load of God's wrath, and shall not faint away under it. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. And they have no rest day nor night." Surely they shall not partake of the glory and beauty of the saints. All their glory dies with them, and shall never rise again. Daniel tells us, they shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt, chap. xii. 2. Shame follows sin, as the shadow follows the body: but the wicked in this world walk in the dark, and often under a disguise: nevertheless, when the Judge comes in flaming fire at the last day, they will be brought to the light; their mask will be taken off, and the shame of their nakedness will clearly appear to themselves and others, and fill their faces with confusion. Their shame will be too deep for blushes: all faces shall gather blackness at that day, when they shall go forth from their graves, as malefactors out of their prisons to execution: for their resurrection is the resurrection of damnation. The greatest beauties, who now pride themselves in their comeliness of body, not regarding their deformed souls, will then appear with a ghastly countenance, a grim and death-like visage. Their looks will be frightful, and they will be horrible spectacles, coming forth from their graves, like infernal furies out of the pit. They shall rise also to everlasting contempt. They shall then be the most contemptible creatures, filled with contempt from God, as vessels of dishonour, whatever honourable employments they had in this world; and filled also with contempt from men. They will be most despicable in the eyes of the saints; even of those saints who gave them honour here, either for their high station, the gifts of God in them, or because they were of the same human nature with themselves. But then their bodies shall be as so many loathsome carcasses, which they shall go forth and look upon with abhorrence; yea, "They shall be an abhorring unto all flesh," Isa. lxvi. 24. The word here rendered "an abhorring," is the same which in the other text is rendered "contempt," and Isaiah and Daniel point at one and the same thing, namely, the loathsomeness of the wicked at the resurrection. They will be loathsome in the eyes of one another. The unclean wretches were never so lovely to each other, as

then they will be loathsome; dear companions in sin will then abhor each other; and the great and honourable men who were wicked, shall be no more regarded by their wicked subjects, their servants, their slaves, than the mire in the streets.

Use I. Of comfort to the people of God. The doctrine of the resurrection is a spring of consolation and joy unto you. Think on it, O believers, when ye are in the house of mourning, for the loss of your godly relations or friends, "that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope;" for you will meet again, 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14. They are but laid down to rest in their beds for a little while, Isa. lvii. 2; but in the morning of the resurrection they will awake again, and come forth out of their graves. The vessel of honour was but coarse, it had much alloy of base metal in it; it was too weak, too dim and inglorious, for the upper house, whatever lustre it had in the lower one. It was cracked, it was polluted; and therefore it must be melted down, to be refined and fashioned more gloriously. Do but wait a while, and you shall see it come forth out of the furnace of earth, vying with the stars in brightness; nay, as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. Have you laid your infant children in the grave? You will see them again. Your God calls himself "the God of your seed;" which, according to our Saviour's exposition, secures the glorious resurrection of the body. Wherefore, let the covenant you embraced comfort your heart, in the joyful expectation, that, by virtue thereof, you shall be raised up in glory. Be not discouraged by reason of a weak and sickly body: there is a day coming, when you shall be entirely whole. At the resurrection, Timothy shall be no more liable to his often infirmities; his body, that was weak and sickly, even in youth, shall be raised in power: Lazarus was healthy and sound, his body being raised incorruptible. Although perhaps, thy weakness will not allow thee now to go one furlong to meet the Lord in public ordinances, yet the day cometh, when thy body shall be no more a clog to thee, but thou shalt "meet the Lord in the air," 1 Thess. iv. 17. It will be with the saints coming up from the grave, as with the Israelites when they came out of Egypt. Psalm cv. 37, "There was not one feeble person among their tribes." Hast thou an uncomely or deformed body? There is a glory within, which will then set all right without, according to all the desire of thine heart. It shall rise a glorious, beautiful, handsome, and well-proportioned body. Its uncomeliness or deformities may go with it to the grave, but they shall not come back with it. O that those, who are now so desirous to be beautiful and handsome, would not be too hasty to effect it with their foolish and sinful arts, but wait and

study the heavenly art of beautifying the body, by endeavouring now to become all glorious within, with the graces of God's Spirit! This would at length make them admirable and everlasting beauties. Thou must indeed, O believer, grapple with death, and shalt get the first fall: but thou shalt rise again, and come off victorious at last. Thou must go down to the grave; but, though it be thy long home, it will not be thine everlasting home. Thou wilt not hear the voice of thy friends there; but thou shalt hear the voice of Christ there. Thou mayest be carried thither with mourning, but thou shalt come up from it rejoicing. Thy friends, indeed, will leave thee there, but thy God will not. What God said to Jacob, concerning his going down to Egypt, Gen. xlvi. 3, 4, he says to thee, on thy going down to the grave, "Fear not to go down—I will go down with thee—and I will also surely bring thee up again." O solid comfort! O glorious hopes! "Wherefore comfort" yourselves, and "one another with these words," 1 Thess. iv. 18.

Use II. Of terror to all unregenerate men. You who are yet in your natural state, look at this view of the eternal state; and consider what will be your part in it, if you be not in time brought into a state of grace. Think, O sinner, on that day when the trumpet shall sound, at which the bars of the pit shall be broken asunder, the doors of the grave shall fly open, the devouring depths of the sea shall throw up their dead, the earth cast forth hers; and death every where, in the excess of astonishment, shall let go its prisoners; and thy wretched soul and body shall be re-united, to be summoned before the tribunal of God. Then, if thou hadst a thousand worlds at thy disposal, thou wouldst gladly give them all away, on condition that thou mightest lie still in thy grave, with the hundredth part of that ease, wherewith thou hast sometimes lain at home on the Lord's day; or, if that cannot be obtained, that thou mightest be but a spectator of the transactions of that day; as thou hast been at some solemn occasions, and rich gospel feasts; or, if even that is not to be purchased, that a mountain or a rock might fall on thee, and cover thee from the face of the Lamb. Ah! how are men infatuated, thus to trifle away their precious time of life, in almost as little concern about death, as if they were like the beasts that perish; Some will be telling where their corpse must be laid; while yet they have not seriously considered, whether their graves shall be their beds, where they shall awake with joy, in the morning of the resurrection; or their prisons, out of which they shall be brought to receive the fearful sentence. Remember, now is your seed-time; and as you sow, so shall you reap. God's seed-time begins at death; and at the resurrection, the bodies.

of the wicked, that were sown "full of sins, that lie down with them in the dust," Job xx. 11, shall spring up again, sinful, wretched, and vile. Your bodies, which are now instruments of sin, the Lord will lay aside for fire, at death, and bring them forth for the fire, at the resurrection. That body, which is now employed in God's service, but is abused by uncleanness and lasciviousness, will then be brought forth in all its vileness, thenceforth to lodge with unclean spirits. The body of the drunkard shall then stagger, by reason of the wine of the wrath of God poured out to him, and poured into him, without mixture. Those who now please themselves in their revellings, will reel to and fro at another rate, when, instead of their songs and music, they shall hear the sound of the last trumpet. Many weary their bodies for worldly gain, who will be loath to distress them for the benefit of their souls; by labour, unreasonably hard, they will quite unfit them for the service of God; and, when they have done, will reckon it a very good reason for shifting duty, that they are already tired out with other business; but that day cometh, when they will be made to abide a yet greater distress. Many will go several miles for back and belly, who will not go half the way for the good of their immortal souls; many will be sickly and unable on the Lord's day, who will be tolerably well all the rest of the week. But when that trumpet sounds, the dead shall find their feet, and none shall be missing in that congregation. When the bodies of the saints shine as the sun, frightful will the looks of their persecutors be. Fearful will their condition be, who shut up the saints in prison, stigmatized, burnt them to ashes, hanged them, and stuck up their heads and hands in public places, to frighten others from the way of righteousness, which they suffered for. Many faces, now fair, will then gather blackness. They shall be no more admired and caressed for that beauty, which has a worm at the root, that will cause it to issue in loathsomeness and deformity. Ah! what is that beauty, under which there lurks a monstrous, deformed, and graceless heart? What, but a sorry paint, a slight varnish; which will leave the body so much the more ugly, before that flaming fire, in which the Judge shall be "revealed from heaven, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel?" 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. They shall be stripped of all their ornaments, and not have a rag to cover their nakedness: their carcases shall be an abhorrence to all flesh, and serve as a foil to set off the beauty and glory of the righteous, and make it appear the brighter.

Now is the time to secure, for yourselves, a part in the resurrection of the just: which if you would do, unite with Jesus Christ by faith, rising spiritually from sin, and glorifying God with your

bodies. He is the "resurrection and the life," John xi. 25. If your bodies be members of Christ, temples of the Holy Ghost, they shall certainly arise in glory. Get into this ark now, and you shall come forth with joy into the new world. Rise from your sins; cast away these grave-clothes, putting off these former lusts. How can any one imagine, that those who continue dead while they live, shall come forth, at the last day, unto the resurrection of life? But that will be the privilege of all those who, having first consecrated their souls and bodies to the Lord by faith, do glorify him with their bodies, as well as their souls; living and acting to him, and for him, yea, and suffering for him too, when he calls them to it.

PART IV.

OF THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on the right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed, &c.—Unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, &c.—And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.—MATT. XXV. 31—34, 41, 46.

THE dead being raised, and those found alive at the coming of the Judge changed, then follows the general judgment, plainly and awfully described in this portion of Scripture; in which we shall take notice of the following particulars: 1. The coming of the Judge, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory," &c. The Judge is Jesus Christ, "the Son of man;" the same by whose almighty power, as he is God, the dead will be raised. He is also called the King, ver. 34, the judging of the world being an act of the royal Mediator's kingly office. He will come in glory; glorious in his own person, and having a glorious retinue, even all the holy angels with him, to minister unto him at this great solemnity. 2. The mounting the tribunal. He is a King, and therefore it is a throne, a glorious throne, "He shall sit upon the throne of his glory," ver. 31. 3. The appearance of the parties. These are, all

nations; all and every one, small and great, of whatever nation, who ever were, are, or shall be on the face of the earth; all shall be gathered before him, summoned before his tribunal. 4. The sorting of them. He shall separate the elect sheep and reprobate goats, setting each party by themselves; as a shepherd, who feeds his sheep and goats together all the day, separates them at night, ver. 32. The godly he will set on his right hand, as the most honourable place; the wicked on the left, ver. 33. Yet so as they shall be both before him, ver. 32. It seems to be an allusion to a custom in the Jewish courts, in which one sat at the right hand of the judge, who wrote the sentence of absolution; another at the left, who wrote the sentence of condemnation. 5. The sentencing of the parties, and that according to their works; the righteous being absolved, and the wicked condemned, ver. 34—41. 6. The execution of both sentences, in the driving away of the wicked into hell, and carrying the godly to heaven, ver. 46.

Doctrine. There shall be a general judgment.—This doctrine I shall, I. Confirm; II. Explain; and then apply.

I. For confirmation of this great truth, that there shall be a general judgment.

1. It is evident from plain Scripture testimonies.—The world has in all ages been told of it. Enoch, before the flood, taught it in his prophecy, related in Jude, ver. 14, 15, "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all," &c. Daniel describes it, chap. vii. 9, 10, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." The apostle is very express, Acts xvii. 31, "He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." See Matt. xvi. 27; 2 Cor. v. 10; 2 Thess. i. 7—10; Rev. xx. 11—15. God not only said it, but he has sworn it, Rom. xiv. 10, 11, "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue confess to God." So that the truth of God is most solemnly pledged for it.

2. The perfect justice and goodness of God, the sovereign ruler of the world, necessarily require it, inasmuch as they require its being well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked. Yet we often see wickedness exalted, while truth and righteousness fall in

the streets; piety oppressed, while profanity and irreligion triumph. This is so very common, that every one who sincerely embraces the way of holiness, must and doth lay his account with the loss of all he has, which the world can take away from him, Luke xiv. 26, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple," But it is inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God, that the affairs of men should always continue in the state which they appear in, from one generation to another; and that every man should not be rewarded according to his works: and since that is not done in this life, there must be a judgment to come; "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven," 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. There will be a day in which the tables will be turned; and the wicked shall be called to an account for all their sins, and suffer the due punishment of them; and the pious shall be prosperous: for, as the apostle argues for the happy resurrection of the saints, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable," 1 Cor. xv. 19. It is true, God sometimes punishes the wicked in this life: that men may know, "He is a God that judgeth in the earth:" but yet much wickedness remains unpunished and undiscovered, to be a pledge of the judgment to come. If none of the wicked were punished here, they would conclude that God had utterly forsaken the earth; if all of them were punished in this life, men would be apt to think there were no after reckoning. Therefore, in the wisdom of God some are punished now, and some not. Sometimes the Lord smites sinners, in the very act of sin; to shew unto the world, that he is witness to all their wickedness, and will call them to an account for it. Sometimes he delays long ere he strikes, that he may discover to the world that he forgets not men's ill deeds, though he does not immediately punish them. Besides all this, the sins of many outlive them; and the impure fountain opened by them, runs long after they are dead and gone. As in the case of Jeroboam, the first king of the ten tribes, whose sin ran all along unto the end of that unhappy kingdom, 2 Kings xvii. 22, 23, "The children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam, which he did; they departed not from them; until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight."

3. The resurrection of Christ is a certain proof, that there shall be a day of judgment. This argument Paul uses to convince the Athenians, that Jesus Christ will be the Judge of the world;" "Whereof," says he, "he hath given assurance to all men, in that

he hath raised him from the dead," Acts xvii. 38. The Judge is already named, his patent written and sealed, yea, and read before all men, in his rising again from the dead. Hereby God has given assurance of it: by raising Christ from the dead, he has exhibited his credentials as Judge of the world. When, in the days of his humiliation, he was cited before a tribunal, arraigned, accused, and condemned of men; he plainly told them of this judgment, and that he himself would be the Judge, Matt. xxvi. 64, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." And now that he is raised from the dead, though condemned as a blasphemer on this very head, is it not an undeniable proof, from Heaven, of the truth of what he asserted? Moreover, this was one of the great ends of Christ's death and resurrection; "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord," that is, "the Lord Judge," as is evident from the context, "both of the dead and of the living," Rom. xiv. 9.

4. Every man bears about with him a witness to this within his own breast, Rom. ii. 15, "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one another." There is a tribunal erected within every man, where conscience is accuser, witness, and judge, binding over the sinner to the judgment of God. This fills the most profligate wretches with horror, and inwardly stings them, upon the commission of some atrocious crime; in effect summoning them to answer for it, before the Judge of the quick and dead. And thus it does, even when the crime is secret, and hid from the eyes of the world. It reaches those, whom the laws of men cannot reach, because of their power or craft. Men have fled from the judgment of their fellow-creatures; yet go where they will, conscience as the supreme Judge's officer, still keeps hold of them, reserving them in its chains, to the judgment of the great day. And whether they escape punishment from men, or fall by the hand of public justice, when they perceive death's approach, they hear from within, of this after reckoning; being constrained to hearken thereto, in these the most serious minutes of their lives. If there be some, in whom nothing of this doth appear, we have no more ground thence to conclude against it, than we have to conclude, that because some men do not groan, therefore they have no pain; or that dying is a mere jest, because there have been some who seemed to make little else of it. A good face may be put upon an ill conscience; the more hopeless men's case is, they reckon it more their interest to make no reflections on their state and case.

But every one, who will consult himself seriously, will find in himself the witness to the judgment to come. Even the heathens wanted not a notion of it, though mixed with fictions of their own. Hence, though some of the Athenians, "when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, mocked," yet there is no account of their mocking, when they heard of the general judgment, Acts xvii. 31, 32.

II. For explanation, the following particulars may serve to give some view of the transactions of that great day.

1. God shall judge the world by Jesus Christ. "He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained," Acts xvii. 31. The psalmist tells us, that God is judge himself, Psalm l. 6. The holy blessed Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is Judge, in respect to judicial authority, dominion, and power: but the Son incarnate is the Judge, in respect of dispensation, and special exercise of that power. The judgment shall be exercised or performed by him as the royal Mediator; for he has delegated power of judgment from the Father, as his servant, "his King," whom he hath "set upon his holy hill of Zion," Psalm ii. 6, and to whom he "hath committed all judgment," John v. 22. This is a part of the Mediator's exaltation, given him in consequence of his voluntary humiliation, Phil. ii. 8—10, "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name," that is, power and authority over all, to-wit, "That at," or in, "the name of Jesus," not the name Jesus; that is not the name above every name; being common to others, as to Justus, Col. iv. 11; and Joshua, Heb. iv. 8, "every knee shall bow." This is explained by the apostle himself, of "standing before the judgment-seat of Christ," Rom. xiv. 10, 11. So he who was judged and condemned of men, shall be the Judge of men and angels.

2. Jesus Christ the Judge, descending from heaven into the air, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. "He shall come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory," Matt. xxiv. 30. This his coming will be a mighty surprise to the world, which will be found in deep security; foolish virgins sleeping, and the wise slumbering. There will then be much luxury and debauchery in the world, little sobriety and watchfulness; a great throng business, but a great scarcity of faith and holiness. "As it was in the days of Noah, so also shall it be in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark: and the flood came, and

destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot: they did eat, they drak, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded.—Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed," Luke xvii. 26—30. The coming of the Judge will surprise some at markets, buying and selling; others at table, eating and drinking, and making merry; others busy with their new plantings; some building new houses; nay, the wedding-day of some will be their own and the world's judgment-day. But the Judge cometh! the markets are marred; the buyer throws away what he has bought; the sellar casts down his money; they are raised from the table, and their mirth is extinguished in a moment; though the tree be set in the earth, the gardener cannot stay to cast the earth about it; the workmen throw away their tools, when the house is half built, and the owner regards it no more; the bridegroom, bride, and guests, must leave the wedding day, and appear before the tribunal; for, "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him," Rev. i. 7. He shall come most gloriously; for he will "come in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels," Mark viii. 38. When he came in the flesh, to die for sinners, he laid aside the robes of his glory, and was despised and rejected of men: but when he comes again, to judge the world, such shall be his visible glory and majesty, that it shall cast an eternal veil over all earthy glory, and fill his greatest enemies with fear and dread. Never had prince and potentate in the world such a glorious train, as will accompany this Judge: all the holy angels shall come with him, for his honour and service. Then He, who was led to the cross with a band of soldiers, will be gloriously attended to the place of judgment, by "not a multitude of the heavenly host," but the whole host of angels: "all his holy angels," says the text.

3. At the coming of the Judge, the summons is given to the parties by the sound of the last trumpet; at which the dead are raised, and those found alive are changed; see 1 Thes. iv. 16, 17. O loud trumpet, that shall be heard at once, in all corners of the earth, and of the sea! O wonderful voice, that will not only disturb those who sleep in the dust, but effectually awaken, rouse them out of their sleep, and raise them from death! Were trumpets sounding now, drums beating, furious soldiers crying and killing men; women and children running and shrieking, the wounded groaning and dying; those who are in the graves would have no more disturbance than if the world were in most profound peace. Yea, were stormy winds casting down the lofty oaks, the seas roaring and swallowing up the ships, the most dreadful thunders going along the heavens, lightnings

every where flashing, the earth quaking, trembling, opening, and swallowing up whole cities, and burying multitudes at once; the dead would still enjoy a perfect repose, and sleep soundly in the dust, though their own dust should be thrown out of its place. But at the sound of this trumpet, they shall all awake. The morning is come, they can sleep no longer; the time for the dead to be judged: they must get out of their graves, and appear before the Judge.

4. The Judge shall sit down on the tribunal; he shall sit on the throne of his glory. He stood before a tribunal on earth, and was condemned as a malefactor: now he shall sit on his own tribunal, and judge the world. He once hung upon the cross, covered with shame; now he shall sit on a throne of glory. What this throne shall be whether a bright cloud, or what else, I shall not inquire. Our eyes shall answer to that question at length. John "saw a great white throne," Rev. xx. 11. "His throne," says Daniel, "was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire," chap vii. 9. Whatever it be, doubtless it will be a throne glorious beyond expression; and in comparison with which the most glorious throne on the earth is but a seat on a dunghill; and the sight of it will equally surprise kings who sat on thrones in this life, and beggars who sat on dunghills. It will be a throne, for stateliness and glory, suited to the quality of him who shall sit on it. Never had a judge such a throne, and never had a throne such a judge on it.

Leaving the discovery of the nature of the throne until that day, it concerns us more nearly to consider what a Judge will sit on it; a point on which we are not left to uncertain conjectures. The Judge on the throne will be, (1.) A Judge visible to our bodily eyes, Rev. i. 7, "Every eye shall see him." When God gave the law on mount Sinai, the people "saw no similitude, only heard a voice:" but when he calls the world to an account how they observed his law, the man Christ being Judge, we shall see our Judge with our eyes, either to our eternal comfort, or to our eternal confusion, according to the entertainment which we give him now. That very body which was crucified without the gates of Jerusalem, between two thieves, shall then be seen on the throne, shining in glory. We now see him symbolically, in the sacrament of his supper; the saints see him by the eye of faith; then all shall see him with those eyes now in their heads. (2.) A Judge having full authority and power to render unto every one according to his works, Christ, as God, hath authority of himself; and as Mediator he hath a judicial power and authority, which his Father has invested him with, according to the covenant between the Father and the Son for the redemption of sinners. His divine glory will be light, by which

all men shall see clearly to read his commission for this great and honourable employment. "All power is given to him in heaven and in earth," Matt. xxviii. 18. He hath "the keys of hell and of death," Rev. i. 18. There can be no appeal from his tribunal: sentence once passed there, must stand for ever; there is no reversing it. All appeals are from an inferior to a superior court: but when God gives sentence against a man, where can he find a higher court to bring his process to? This judgment is the Mediator's judgment, and therefore the last judgment. If the Intercessor be against us, who can be for us? If Christ condemn us, who will absolve us? (3.) A Judge of infinite wisdom. His eyes will pierce into, and clearly discern the most intricate cases. His omniscience qualifies him for judging the most retired thoughts, as well as the words and works. The most subtile sinner shall not be able to deceive him, nor, by any artful management, to palliate the crime. He is the searcher of hearts, to whom nothing can be hid or perplexed; but all things are naked and open unto his eyes, Heb. iv. 13. (4.) A most just Judge; a Judge of perfect integrity. He is the righteous Judge, 2 Tim. iv. 8, and his throne a great white throne, Rev. xx. 11, from whence no judgment shall proceed, but what is pure and spotless. The Thebans painted justice blind, and without hands; because judges ought not to respect persons, nor take bribes. The Areopagites judged in the dark; that they might not regard who spoke, but what was spoken. With the Judge on his throne, there will be no respect of persons; he will neither regard the person of the rich, nor of the poor: but just judgment shall go forth, in every one's cause. (5.) An omnipotent Judge, able to put his sentence in execution. The united force of devils and wicked men will be altogether unable to withstand him. They cannot retard the execution of the sentence against them one moment; far less can they stop it altogether. "Thousand thousands of angels minister unto him," Dan. vii. 10. And, by the breath of his mouth, he can drive the cursed herd whither he pleases.

5. The parties shall appear. These are men and devils. Although the fallen angels were, from the first moment of their sinning, subjected to the wrath of God, and were cast down to hell, and wherever they go they carry their hell about with them; yet it is evident that they are reserved unto judgment, 2 Pet. ii. 4, namely, unto the judgment of the great day, Jude verse 6. Then they shall be solemnly and publicly judged, 1 Cor. vi. 3, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" At that day they shall answer for their trade of sinning, and tempting to sin, which they have

been carrying on from the beginning. And they shall receive the due reward of all the dishonour which they have done to God, and of all the mischief which they have done to men. Those wicked spirits now in chains, though not in such strait custody, but that they go about, like roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour, shall then receive their final sentence, and be shut up in their den, in the prison; where they shall be held in extreme and unspeakable torment, through all eternity, Rev. xx. 10. "And the devil, that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." In prospect of which, the devils said to Christ, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Matt. viii. 29.

But what we are chiefly concerned to take notice of, is the case of men at that day. All men must appear before this tribunal. All of each sex, of every age, quality, and condition; the great and small, noble and ignoble; none are excepted. Adam and Eve, with all their sons and daughters, every one who has had or, to the end of the world, shall have a living soul united to a body, will make up this great congregation. Even those who refused to come to the throne of grace, shall be forced to the bar of justice: for there can be no hiding from the all-seeing Judge, no flying from him who is present every where, no resisting of him who is armed with almighty power, "We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ," 2 Cor. v. 10. "Before him shall be gathered all nations," says the text. This is to be done by the ministry of angels. By them shall the elect be gathered, Mark xiii. 27, "Then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds." And they also shall gather the reprobate, Matth. xiii. 40, 41, "So shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. From all corners of the world shall the inhabitants thereof be gathered unto the place where he shall set his throne for judgment.

6. There shall be a separation made between the righteous and the wicked; the fair company of the elect sheep being set on Christ's right hand, and the reprobate goats on his left. There is no necessity to wait for this separation, till the trial is over; since the parties will rise out of their graves with plain outward marks of distinction, as was mentioned before. The separation seems to be effected by that double gathering, before mentioned; the one of the elect, Mark xiii. 2: the other of them that do iniquity, Matt. xiii. 41. The elect being "caught up together in the clouds, meet the

Lord in the air," 1 Thess. iv. 17, and so are set on his right hand; and the reprobate left on the earth, are placed upon the Judge's left hand Here is now a total separation of two parties, who were always opposite to each other in their principles, aims, and manner of life; who, when together, were a burden the one to the other, under which the one groaned, and the other raged; but now they are finally parted, never to come together any more. The righteous and wicked, like the iron and clay, which could never mix, See Dan. ii. 41—43, are quite separated; the one being drawn up into the air, by the attractive virtue of "the stone cut out of the mountain," namely, Jesus Christ; and the other left upon its earth, to be trod under foot.

Now let us look to the right hand, and there we shall see a glorious company of saints shining, as so many stars in their orbs; and with a cheerful countenance beholding Him who sitteth upon the throne. Here will be two wonderful sights, which the world never saw. 1. A great congregation of saints, in which there will not be so much as one hypocrite. There was a bloody Cain in Adam's family; a cursed Ham in Noah's family, in the ark; a treacherous Judas in Christ's own family; but in that company there will be none but sealed ones, members of Christ, having all one Father. This is a sight reserved for that day. 2. All the godly upon one side. Seldom or never do the saints on earth make such harmony, but there are some jarring strings among them. It is not to be expected, that men who see but in part, though they are all going to one city, should agree as to every step in the way: no, we must not look for it, in this state of imperfection. But at that day, Paul and Barnabas shall meet in peace and unity, though once "the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder, the one from the other," Acts xv. 39. There shall be no more divisions, no more separate standing amongst those who belonged to Christ. All the godly, of the different parties, shall then be upon one side; seeing, whatever were their differences in lesser things, while in the world, yet even then they met and concerted all in one Lord Jesus Christ, by a true and lively faith, and in the one way of holiness, or practical godliness. And vile hypocrites, of whatever party, shall be led forth with the workers of iniquity.

Look to the left hand, and there you will see the cursed goats, all the wicked ones, from Cain to the last ungodly person who shall be in the world, gathered together into one most miserable congregation. There are many assemblies of the wicked now; then there shall be but one. But all of them shall be present there,

brought together, as one herd for the slaughter, bellowing and roaring, weeping and howling, for the miseries come, and that are coming on them. And remember, thou shalt not be a mere spectator, to look at these two such different companies; but must thyself take thy place in one of the two, and shalt share with the company, whatever hand it be on. Those who now abhor no society so much as that of the saints, would then be glad to be allowed to get in among them, though it were but to lie at their feet. But then not one tare shall be found with the wheat; He will thoroughly purge his floor. Many of the right-hand men of this world, will be left-hand men in that day. Many, who must have the door on the right hand of those who are better than they, if the righteous be more excellent than his neighbour, shall then be turned to the left hand, as most despicable wretches! O how terrible will this separation be to the ungodly! How dreadful will this gathering them together into one company be! What they will not believe, they will then see, namely, that but few are saved. They think it enough now to be neighbour-like, and can securely follow the multitude: but the multitude on the left hand will yield them no comfort. How will it sting the ungodly Christian, to see himself set on the same hand with Turks and Pagans! How will it gall profane Protestants, to stand with idolatrous Papists; praying people, with their profane neighbours, who mocked at religious exercises; formal professors, strangers to the new birth and the power of godliness, with persecutors! Now there are many opposite societies in the world; but then all the ungodly shall be in one society. And how dreadful will the faces of companions in sin be to one another there! What doleful shrieks, when the drunkards, who have had many a jovial day together, shall see one another in the face; when the husband and wife, the parents and children, masters and servants, and neighbours, who have been snares and stumbling-blocks to one another, to the ruin of their own souls and those of their relatives, shall meet again in that miserable society! Then there will be curses instead of salutations; and tearing of themselves, and raging against one another, instead of the wonted embraces.

7. The parties shall be tried. The trial cannot be difficult, seeing the Judge is omniscient, and nothing can be hid from him. But, that his righteous judgment may be made evident to all, he will set the hidden things of darkness in the clearest light at that trial, 1 Cor. iv. 5.

Men shall be tried, 1. Upon their works; for "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil," Eccl. xii. 14. The Judge will try

every man's conversation, and set his deeds done in the body, with all the circumstances thereof, in a true light. Then will many actions, commended and applauded of men, as good and just, be discovered to have been evil and abominable in the sight of God; and many works, now condemned by the world, will be approved and commended by the great Judge, as good and just. Secret things will be brought to light; and what was hid from the view of the world, shall be laid open. Wickedness, which hath kept its lurking place in spite of all human search, will then be brought forth to the glory of God, and the confusion of impenitent sinners, who hid it.—The world appears now very vile in the eyes of those who are exercised to godliness; and it will then appear a thousand times more vile, when that which is done of men in secret comes to be discovered. Every good action shall then be remembered; and the hidden religion and good works, most industriously concealed by the saints from the eyes of men, shall no more lie hid: for though the Lord will not allow men to proclaim every one his own goodness, yet he himself will do it in due time. 2. Their words shall be judged, Matt. xii. 37, "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Not a word spoken for God and his cause in the world, from love to himself, shall be forgotten. They are all kept in remembrance, and shall be brought forth as evidences of faith, and of an interest in Christ. Mal. iii. 16, 17, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels." The tongue, which did run at random, shall then confess to God; and the speaker shall find it to have been followed, and every word noted that dropped from the unsanctified lips. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment, Matth. xii. 36. And if they shall give account of idle words, that is, words spoken to no good purpose, neither for God's glory, nor their own nor their neighbour's good; how much more shall men's wicked words, their sinful oaths, curses, lies, filthy communications, and bitter words, be called over again in that day! The tongues of many shall then fall upon themselves, and ruin them. 3. Men's thoughts shall be brought into judgment: the Judge will make manifest the counsels of the hearts, 1 Cor. iv. 5. Thoughts go free from man's judgment, but not from the judgment of the heart-searching God, who knows men's thoughts, without the help of signs to discern them by. The secret springs of men's actions will then be brought to light; and the sins,

that never came further than the heart, will then be laid open. O what a figure will man's corrupt nature present, when his inside is turned out, and all his speculative impurities are exposed! The rottenness that is within many a whited sepulchre, the speculative filthiness and wantonness, murder and malignity, now lurking in the hearts of men, as in the chambers of imagery, will then be discovered, and what good was in the hearts of any shall no more lie concealed. If it was in their hearts to build a house to the Lord, they shall hear, that they did well that it was in their heart.

This trial will be righteous and impartial, accurate and searching, clear and evident. The Judge is the righteous Judge, and he will do right to every one. He has a just balance for good and evil actions, and for honest and false hearts. The fig-leaf cover of hypocrisy will then be blown aside, and the hypocrite's nakedness will appear; as when the Lord came to judge Adam and Eve "in the cool," or, as the word is, "in the wind of the day," Gen. iii. 8. "The fire," which tries things most exquisitely, "shall try every man's work, of what sort it is," 1 Cor. iii. 13. Man's judgment is often perplexed and confused: but here the whole process shall be clear and evident, as written with a sunbeam. It shall be clear to the Judge, to whom no case can be intricate; to the parties, who shall be convinced, Jude ver. 15. And the multitudes on both sides shall see that the Judge is clear when he judgeth; for then "the heavens shall declare his righteousness," in the audience of all the world; and so it shall be universally known, Psalm l. 6.

On these accounts it is, that this trial is held out in the Scripture, under the notion of "opening of books;" and men are said to be "judged out of those things written in the books," Rev. xx. 12. The judge of the world, who infallibly knows all things, has no need of books to be laid before him, to prevent mistakes in any point of law or fact; but the expression points at his proceedings as most nice, accurate, just and well grounded, in every step of them. Now, there are four books that shall be opened in that day.

(1.) The book of God's remembrance, or omniscience, Mal. iii. 16. This is an exact record of every man's state, thoughts, words, and deeds, good or evil: it is, as it were, a day-book, in which the Lord puts down all that passes in men's hearts, lips, and lives; and it is a reckoning up every day that one lives. In it are recorded men's sins and good works, secret and open, with all their circumstances. Here are registered all their privileges, temporal and spiritual mercies, often made ready to their hand; the checks, admonitions, and rebukes, given by teachers, neighbours, afflictions, and men's own consciences; every thing in its due order.—This book will serve

only as a bill of indictment, in respect of the ungodly; but it will be for another use in respect of the godly, namely, for a memorial of their good. The opening of it is the Judge's bringing to light what is written in it; the reading, as it were of the bill and memorial, respectively, in their hearing.

(2.) The book of conscience will be opened, which shall be as a thousand witnesses to prove the fact, Rom. ii. 15, "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness." Conscience is a censor going with every man wherever he goes, taking an account of his deeds done in the body, and, as it were, noting them in a book.—Much is written in it, which cannot be read now; the writing of conscience being, in many cases, like to that which is made with the juice of lemons, not to be read till it is held before the fire; but then men shall read it clearly and distinctly; the fire which is to try every man's work, will make the book of conscience legible in every point.

Though the book be sealed now, the conscience blind, dumb, and deaf, the seals will then be broken, and the book opened. There shall be no more a silent conscience, and far less a seared conscience, amongst all the ungodly crew: but their conscience shall be most quick-sighted, and most lively, in that day. None shall then call good evil, or evil good. Ignorance of what sin is, and what things are sins, will have no place among them: and the subtle reasonings of men, in favour of their lusts, will then be for ever baffled by their own conscience. None shall have the favour, if I may so speak, of lying under the soft cover of delusion; but they shall all be convicted by their conscience. Whether they will or not, they must look on this book, read, be confounded, and stand speechless, knowing that nothing is charged upon them by mistake; since this is a book which was always in their own custody. Thus shall the Judge make every man see himself in the glass of his own conscience, which will make quick work.

(3.) The book of the law shall be opened. This book is the standard and rule, by which is known what is right, and what is wrong; as also, what sentence is to be passed accordingly, on those who are under it.—As to the opening of this book, in a statute, which shews what is sin, and what is duty; it agrees with the opening of the book of conscience: for conscience is set, by the sovereign lawgiver, in every man's breast, to be his private teacher, to shew him the law; and his private pastor, to make application of the same; and at that day, it will be perfectly fit for its office, so that the conscience, which is most stupid now, shall then read to the man most accurate, but dreadful lectures on the law. But what seems

principally pointed at by the opening of this book, is the opening of that part of it which determines the reward of men's works. Now the law promises life, upon perfect obedience: but none can be found on the right hand, or on the left, who will pretend to that, when once the book of conscience is opened. It threatens death upon disobedience, and will effectually bring it upon all under its dominion.—And this part of the book of the law, determining the reward of men's works, is opened, only to shew what must be the portion of the ungodly, and that there they may read their sentence, before it is pronounced. But it is not opened for the sentence of the saints; for no sentence absolving a sinner could ever be drawn out of it. The law promises life, not as it is a rule of actions, but as a covenant of works; therefore innocent man could not have demanded life upon his obedience, till the law was reduced into the form of a covenant; as was shewn before. But the saints, having been, in this life, brought under a new covenant, namely, the covenant of grace, were dead to the law as a covenant of works, and it was dead to them. Wherefore, as they shall not now have any fear of death from it; so they can have no hope of life from it, since "they are not under the law, but under grace," Rom. vi. 14. But, for their sentence, "another book is opened."

Thus the book of the law is opened, for the sentence against all those on the left hand: and by it they will clearly see the justice of the judgment against them, and how the Judge proceeds therein according to law. Nevertheless, there will be this difference, namely that those who had only the natural law, and lived not under any special revelation, shall be judged by that law of nature they had in their hearts; which law declares "that they which commit such things," as they will stand convicted of "are worthy of death," Rom. i. 32. But those who had the written law, to whom the word of God came, sounding in the visible church, shall be judged by that written law. So says the apostle, Rom. ii. 12, "For as many as have sinned without" the written "law, shall also perish without" the written "law: and as many as have sinned in the law," that is, under the written law, "shall also be judged by the" written "law."

(4.) "Another book" shall be "opened, which is the book of life," Rev. xx. 12. In this the names of all the elect are written, as Christ said to his disciples, Luke x. 20, "Your names are written in heaven." This book contains God's gracious and unchangeable purpose, to bring all the elect to eternal life; and that, in order thereto, they be redeemed by the blood of his Son, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and raised up by him at the last day

without sin. It is now lodged in the Mediator's hand, as the book of "the manner of the kingdom:" and having perfected the work the Father gave him to do, he shall, on the great day, produce and open the book, and present the persons therein named, "faultless before the presence of his glory, Jude, verse 24; not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," Eph. v. 27. Not one of those who are named in the book will be missing. They shall be found qualified, according to the order of the book, redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, raised up, without spot: what remains then, but, according to the same book, they obtain the great end, namely, everlasting life? This may be gathered from that precious promise, Rev. iii. 5, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment," being raised in glory; "and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father:" it shall be, as it were, read out, among the rest of God's elect, "and before his angels." Here is now the ground of the saints' absolution, the ground of the blessed sentence they shall receive. The book of life being opened, it will be known to all, who are elected, and who are not.—Thus far of the trial of the parties.

8. Then shall the Judge pronounce this blessed sentence on the saints, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matt. xxv. 34. It is most probable, the man Christ will pronounce it with an audible voice: which not only all the saints, but all the wicked likewise, shall hear and understand. Who can conceive the inexpressible joy, with which these happy ones will hear these words? Who can imagine that fulness of joy, which will be poured into their hearts, with these words reaching their ears? And who can conceive how much of hell shall break forth into the hearts of all the ungodly crew, by these words of heaven? It is certain that this sentence shall be pronounced, before the sentence of damnation. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed," &c. Matt. xxv. 34. "Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed," &c. verse 41. There is no need of this order, that the saints may, without fear, hear the other sentence on the reprobate: they who are raised in glory, caught up to meet the Lord in the air, presented without spot, and whose souls, for the far greater part of them, have been so long in heaven before, shall not be capable of any such fear. But hereby they will be brought in orderly, to sit in judgment, as Christ's assessors, against the ungodly; whose torment will be aggravated by it. It will be a hell to them to be kept out of hell, till they see the doors of heaven opened to receive the saints, who once dwelt in the same world with

them; and perhaps in the same parish, country, or town, and sat under the same ministry with themselves. Thus will they see heaven afar off, to make their hell the hotter: like that unbelieving lord, 2 Kings vii. 19, 20. They "shall see" the plenty "with their eyes, but shall not eat thereof." Every word of the blessed sentence shall be like an envenomed arrow shot into their hearts while they see what they have lost, and from thence gather what they are to expect.

This sentence passes on the saints, "according to their works, Rev. xx. 12; but not for their works, nor for their faith, as if eternal life were merited by them. The sentence itself overthrows this absurd conceit. The kingdom which they are called to, was "prepared for them, from the foundation of the world;" not left to be merited by themselves, who were but of yesterday. They inherit it as sons, but procure it not to themselves as servants do the reward of their work. They were redeemed by the blood of Christ, and clothed with his spotless righteousness, which is the proper cause of the sentence. They were also qualified for heaven, by the sanctification of his Spirit; and hence it is "according to their works:" so that the ungodly world shall see now, that the Judge of the quick and dead does good to those who were good. Therefore it is added to the sentence, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat," &c., ver. 35, 36; which does not denote the ground, but the evidence of their right to heaven; as if a judge should say, he absolves a man pursued for debt, for the witnesses depose that it is paid already. So the apostle says, 1 Cor. x. 5., "But with many of them God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness." Their overthrow in the wilderness was not the ground of God's displeasure with them, but it was an evidence of it. And thus our Lord teaches us the necessary connexion between glory and good works, namely works evangellically good; works having a respect to Jesus Christ, and done out of faith in him, and love to him, without which they will not be regarded in that day. And the saints will so far be judged according to such works, that the degrees of glory amongst them shall be according to these works. For it is an eternal truth, "He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly," 2 Cor. ix. 6.

Thus shall the good works of the godly have a glorious, but a gratuitous reward; a reward of grace, not of debt; which will fill them with wonder at the riches of free grace, and at the Lord's condescending to take any notice, especially such public notice, of their poor worthless works; which seems to be the import of what they are said to answer, "saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered?"

ver. 37—39. And may they not justly wonder to see themselves set down at the marriage supper of the Lamb, and to hear him acknowledge a dinner or supper, a little meat or drink, such as they had, which they gave to a hungry member of Christ, for his sake? O plentiful harvest, following upon the seed of good works! Rivers of pleasures, in exchange for a cup of cold water, given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple! Eternal mansions of glory, in exchange for a night's lodging given to a saint, who was a stranger! Everlasting robes of glory, in exchange for a new coat, or, it may be, an old one, bestowed on some saint, who had not necessary clothing! A visit to the sick saint, repaid by Christ himself, coming in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels! A visit made to a poor prisoner for the cause of Christ, repaid with a visit from the Judge of all, taking away the visitant with him to the palace of heaven, there to be for ever with himself! These things will be matter of everlasting wonder; and should stir up all, to sow liberally in time, while seed-time of good works lasts. But it is Christ's stamp on good works, that puts a value on them, in the eye of our gracious God; which seems to be the import of our Lord's reply, ver. 40, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

9. Now the saints having received their own sentence, "they shall judge the world," 1 Cor. vi. 2. This was not fulfilled, when the empire became Christian, and Christians were made magistrates. No, the psalmist tells us, "This honour have all the saints," Psalm cxlix. 9. And the apostle in the forecited place, adds, "And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" ver. 3, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" Being called, they come to receive their kindgdom, in the view of angels and men: they go as it were, from the bar to the throne, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne," Rev. iii. 21. They shall not judge the world, in Christ their head, by way of communion with him, by their works compared with those of the ungodly, or by way of testimony against them; but they shall be assesors to Jesus Christ the Judge, giving their voice against them, consenting to his judgment as just, and saying *Amen* to the doom pronounced against all the ungodly: as is said of the saints, upon the judgment of the great whore, Rev. xix. 1, 2, "Hallelujah —for true and righteous are his judgments." Thus, the upright shall have dominion over them, in the morning," of the resurrection, Psalm xlix. 14. Then, and not till then, shall that be fully accomplished, in Psalm cxlix. 6—9, "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand: to execute ven-

geance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people—this honour have all the saints." O! what a strange turn of affairs will appear here! What an astonishing sight will it be, to see wicked men, formerly their unjust judges, standing as criminals before the saints whom formerly they condemned as heretics, rebels, and traitors! To see men of riches and power stand pale-faced, before those whom they oppressed! To see the mocker stand trembling before those whom he mocked! the worldly wise man, before those whom he accounted fools! Then shall the despised faces of the saints be dreadful faces to the wicked; and those, who sometimes were the song of the drunkards, shall then be a terror to them. All wrongs must be righted at length, and every one set in his proper place.

10. The Judge will pronounce the sentence of damnation on all the ungodly multitude. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," ver. 41. Fearful doom! and that from the same mouth, from whence proceeded the sentence of absolution before. It was an aggravation of the misery of the Jews, when their city was destroyed, that they were ruined by one who was accounted the darling of the world. O what an aggravation of the misery of the wicked will it be also, that Christ will pronounce this sentence! To hear the curse from mount Zion, must needs be most terrible. To be condemned by him, who came to save sinners, must be double damnation. But thus it will be. The Lamb of God shall roar, as a lion, against them: he shall excommunicate, and cast them out of his presence for ever, by a sentence from the throne, saying, "Depart from me, ye cursed." He shall adjudge them to everlasting fire, and the society of devils for evermore. And this sentence also we suppose, will be pronounced with an audible voice, by the man Christ. And all the saints shall say, "Hallelujah, true and righteous are his judgments." None were so compassionate as the saints when on earth, during the time of God's patience. But now that time is at an end: their compassion for the ungodly is swallowed in joy in the Mediator's glory, and his executing just judgment, by which his enemies are made his footstool. Though, when on earth, the righteous man wept in secret places for their pride, and because they would not hear; yet he "shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance: he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked," Psalm lviii. 10. No pity shall then be shewn them from their nearest relations. The godly wife shall applaud the justice of the Judge, in the condemnation of her ungodly husband: the godly husband shall say *Amen* to the condemnation of her who lay in his bosom: the godly parents shall say *Hallelujah*, at the passing of the sentence

against their ungodly child: and the godly child shall, from the bottom of his heart, approve the condemnation of his wicked parents, the father who begat him, and the mother who bore him. The sentence is just; they are judged "according to their works," Rev. xx. 12.

There is no wrong done them, "For I was an hungered," saith our Lord, "and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not," ver. 42, 43. These are not only evidences of their ungodly and cursed state, but most proper grounds of their condemnation: for though good works do not merit salvation, yet evil works merit damnation. Sins of one kind only, namely, of omission, are here mentioned; not that these alone shall be then discovered, for the books lay all open but because these, though there were no more, are sufficient to condemn unpardoned sinners. And if men are condemned for sins of omission, much more for sins of commission. The omission of works of charity and mercy, is mentioned in particular, to stop the mouths of the wicked; for it is most just that he "have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy," James ii. 13. Taking notice of the omission of acts of charity and mercy towards the distressed members of Christ, intimates, that it is the judgment of those who have heard of Christ in the gospel, that is principally intended in this portion of Scripture; and that the slighting of Christ will be the great cause of the ruin of those who hear the gospel: but the enmity of the hearts of the wicked against Christ himself, is discovered by the entertainment they now give to his members.

In vain will they say, "When saw we thee an hungered, or athirst?" &c. ver. 44. For the Lord reckons, and will reckon, the world's unkindness to his people, unkindness to himself; "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me," ver. 45. O meat and drink unhappily spared, when a member of Christ was in need of it! O wretched neglect, that the stranger saint was not taken in! It had been better for them if they had quitted their own room, and their own bed, than that he wanted lodging. O cursed clothing, may the wicked say, that was in my house, locked up in my chest, or hanging in my wardrobe, and was not brought out to clothe such a one! O that I had stripped myself, rather than he had gone away without clothing! Cursed business that diverted me from visiting such a saint! O that I had rather watched whole nights with him! Wretch that I was! Why did I sit at ease in my house, when he was in prison, and did not visit him? But now the tables are turned: Christ's servants shall eat, but I shall be

hungry; his servants shall drink, but I shall be thirsty; they rejoice, but I am ashamed, Isa. lxv. 13. They are taken in, but I am cast out, and bid to depart; they are clothed with robes of glory, but I "walk naked, and they see my shame," Rev. xvi. 15. They are now raised up on high, beyond the reach of sickness or pain; but I must now "lie down in sorrow," Isa. l. 11. Now they will go to the palace of heaven, but I must go to the prison of hell.

But if our Lord thus resents men's neglecting to help his people under these, and the like distresses; what may they expect who are the authors and instruments of them? If they shall be fed with wrath, who fed them not when they were hungry; what shall become of those, who robbed and spoiled them? What a full cup of wrath shall be the portion of those, who were so far from giving them meat or drink when hungry or thirsty, that they made it a crime for others to entertain them, and made themselves drunken with their blood! They must lodge with devils for evermore, who took not in the Lord's people, when strangers: then, what a lodging shall those have, who drove them out of their own houses, out of their native land, and made them strangers! Men will be condemned for not clothing them, when naked: then, how heavy must the sentence of those be, who have stripped them, and made them go without clothing! Surely, if not visiting them in sickness, or in prison, shall be so severely punished; those shall not escape a most heavy doom, who have cast them into prisons, and have put them under such hardships, as have impaired their health, brought sickness on them, and cut short their days in prison, or out of prison.

To put a face upon such wicked practices, men will pretend to retain an honour for Christ and religion, while they thus treat his members, walking in his way, and keeping the truth. They are here represented to say, "When saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?" ver. 44. As if they should say, Our bread, drink, lodging, clothing, and visits, were indeed refused, but not to Christ; but to a set of men of a bad character, men who "turned the world upside down," Acts xvii. 6; who troubled Israel, 1 Kings xviii. 7; a humorous and fantastic sort of people, having laws diverse from all people, factious and rebellious; they did not keep the king's laws, and were therefore a dangerous set of men; it was not for the king's profit to suffer them, Esther iii. 8. But although men cast iniquity upon the godly, and give them ill names, that they may treat them as criminals, all these pretences will avail them nothing, in the great day, before the righteous Judge, nor before their own consciences, but the real ground of their enmity

against the saints will be found, to their own conviction, to be their enmity against Christ himself. This seems to be the import of the objection of the damned, ver. 44, and of the answer to it, ver. 45, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

11. Sentence being passed on both parties, the full execution of the same follows, ver. 46, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." The condemned shall get no reprieve, but go to their place without delay; they shall be driven away from the judgment-seat into hell: and the saints "shall enter into the King's palace," Psalm xlv. 15, namely, into heaven, the seat of the blessed. But our Lord Christ, and his glorious company, shall keep the field that day and see the backs of all their enemies; for the condemned go off first.

In this day of the Lord, the great day, shall be the general conflagration; by which these visible heavens, the earth, and sea, shall pass away. Not that they shall be annihilated, or reduced to nothing, that is not the operation of fire; but they shall be dissolved, and purified by that fire, from all the effects of sin, and of the curse, upon them; and then renewed, and made more glorious and stable. Of this conflagration, the apostle Peter speaks, 2 Pet. iii. 10, "But the day of the Lord will come, as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up." See also ver. 7, 12. And of the renewing of the world, he adds, ver. 13, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

It seems most agreeable to the Scriptures, and to the nature of the thing, to conceive this conflagration to follow after the general judgment; sentence being passed on both parties before it. And I judge it probable, that it will fall in with the putting of the sentence in execution against the damned; so as they shall, according to their sentence, depart, and the heavens and the earth pass away, together and at once, at that furious rebuke from the throne, driving them away, out of the world (in this fire) to the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Even as, in the deluge, with which the apostle Peter compares the conflagration, or burning of the world 2 Pet. iii. 6, 7, the world itself, and the wicked upon it, perished together; the same water which destroyed the earth, sweeping away the inhabitants. For it is not likely that the wicked shall at all stand on the new earth, "wherein dwelleth righteousness," 2 Pet. iii. 13. And as for this earth, it shall "flee away,"

which seems to denote a very quick despatch, and it shall "flee from His face, who sits on the throne," Rev. xx. 11, "And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away." The execution of the sentence on the wicked is also thus expressed; they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence," or "from the face of the Lord," 2 Thess. i. 9. The original word is the same in both texts, which, being compared, seem to say, that these creatures, abused by the wicked, being left to stand, as witnesses against them, in the judgment, are, after sentence passed on their abusers, made to pass away with them from the face of the Judge. It is true, the fleeing away of the earth and the heavens is narrated, Rev. xx. 11, before the judgment; but that does not prove its going before the judgment, any more than the narrating of the judgment, ver. 12, before the resurrection, ver. 13, will prove the judgment to be before it. Further, it is remarkable, in the execution of the sentence, Rev. xx. 14, 15, that not only the reprobate are "cast into the lake," but "death and hell" are cast into it likewise: all effects of sin and of the curse are removed out of the world, for which very cause shall the conflagration be, and they are confined to the place of the damned. Besides all this, it is evident that the end of the world is by the conflagration: and the apostle tells us, 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet." Which last, as it must be done before the end, so it seems not to be done, but by putting the sentence in execution, passed in the day of judgment, against the wicked.

Now, if the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah, that are set forth for an example, Jude, ver. 7, was so dreadful, how terrible will that day be, when the whole world shall be at once in flames! How will wretched worldlings look, when their darling world shall be all on fire! Then shall strong castles and towering palaces, with all their rich furniture, go up together in one flame with the lowest cottages. What heart can fully conceive the terror of that day to the wicked, when the whole fabric of heaven and earth shall at once be dissolved by that fire? when that miserable company shall be driven from the tribunal to the pit with fire within them, and without on every hand of them; and fire awaiting them in the lake; whither this fire, for ought that appears, may also follow them.

As for the particular place of this judgment, though some point us to the valley of Jehoshaphat for it: yet our Lord, who infallibly

knew it, being asked the question by his disciples, "Where, Lord?" only said, "Wheresoever the body is, thither shall the eagles be gathered together," Luke xvii. 37. After which answer, it is too much for men to renew the question. As for the time, when it shall be, in vain do men search for what the Lord has purposely kept secret, Acts i. 7, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power." The apostle Paul, after having very plainly described the second coming of Christ, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, adds, chap. v. 1, 2, "But of the times and seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you: for yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." Nevertheless, some, in several ages, have made very bold with the time; and several particular years, which are now past, have been given out to the world, for the time of the end, by men who have pried into the secrets of God. Time has proclaimed to the world, their rashness and folly; and it is probable they will be no more happy in their conjectures, whose determinate time is yet to come. Let us rest in that "He cometh." God has kept the day hid from us, that we may be every day ready for it, Matt. xxv. 13, "Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh." And let us remember, that the last day of our life, will determine our state in the last day of the world: and as we die, so shall we be judged.

I shall now conclude this subject, with some application of what has been said.

Use I. Of comfort to all the saints. Here is abundance of consolation to all who are in the state of grace. Whatever be your afflictions in the world, this day will make up all your losses "Though you have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold," Psalm lxviii. 13. Though the world reproach, judge, and condemn you, the Judge will at that day absolve you, and bring forth your righteousness as the light.—The world's fools will then appear to have been the only wise men who were in it. Though the cross be heavy, you may well bear it, in expectation of the crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge will then give you. If the world despise you, and treat you with the utmost contempt, regard it not: the day cometh wherein you shall sit with Christ in his throne. Be not discouraged by reason of manifold temptations. But resist the devil in confidence of a full and complete victory; for you shall judge the tempter at last. Though you have hard wrestling now with the body of sin and death; yet you shall get all your enemies under your feet at length, and be presented faultless before the pre-

sence of his glory. Let not the terror of that day dispirit you, when you think upon it; let those who have slighted the Judge, and continue enemies to him, and to the way of holiness, droop and hang down their heads, when they think of his coming: but lift you up your heads with joy, for the last day will be your best day. The Judge is your Head and Husband, your Redeemer, and your Advocate. You must appear before the judgment-seat, but you "shall not come into condemnation," John v. 24. His coming will not be against you-but for you. He came in the flesh, to remove the lawful impediments of the spiritual marriage, by his death: he came in the gospel to you, to espouse you to himself; he will come, at last, to solemnize the marriage, and take the bride home to his Father's house. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

Use II. Of terror to all unbelievers. This may serve to awaken a secure generation, a world lying in wickedness, as if they were never to be called to an account for it; and slighting the Mediator, as if he were not to judge them. Ah! how few have lively impressions of the judgment to come! Most men live as if what is said of it from the word were but idle tales. The profane lives of many speak the thoughts of it to be far from their hearts, and in very deed make a mock of it before the world, saying, in effect, "Where is the promise of his coming?" The hypocrisy of others, who blind the eyes of the world with being a splendid profession, being in appearance Christ's sheep, while they are indeed the devil's goats, proves that the great separation of the sheep from the goats is very little laid to heart. How do many indulge themselves in secret wickedness, of which they would be ashamed before witnesses; not considering, that their most secret thoughts and actions will, at that day, be discovered before the great congregation! How eagerly are men's hearts set on the world, as if it were to be their everlasting habitation! The solemn assemblies, and public ordinances, wherein the Judge is upon a transaction of peace with the criminals, are undervalued: many hearts swim like feathers in the waters of the sanctuary, that sink like stones to the bottom in cares of this life; they will be very serious in trifles of this world, and trifle in the most serious and weighty things of another world: but, O consider the day that is approaching, in which Christ will come to judgment! the world shall be summoned, by the sound of the last trumpet, to appear before his tribunal. The Judge will sit on his throne, and all nations will be summoned before him; the separation will be made between the godly and the wicked; the books opened, and the dead judged out of them; one party will be adjudged to everlasting life, and the other to everlasting fire, according to their works.

It would be a sight, of admirable curiosity, if thou couldst wrap up thyself in some dark cloud, or hide thyself in the cleft of some high rock, from whence thou mightst espy wicked kings, princes, judges, and great ones of the earth, rising out of their marble tombs, and brought to the bar, to answer for all their cruelty, injustice, oppression, profanity, without any marks of distinction, but what their wickedness puts upon them: profane, unholy, and unfaithful ministers, pursued with the curses of their ruined people, from their graves to the judgment seat, and charged with the blood of souls, to whom they gave not faithful warning: mighty men standing trembling before the Judge unable to recover their wonted boldness, to outwit him with their subtleties, or defend themselves by their strength: delicate women cast forth of their graves, as abominable branches, dragged to the tribunal, to answer for their ungodly lives; the ignorant, suddenly taught in the law to their cost; and the learned declared before the world, fools and laborious triflers: the athiest convinced, the hypocrite unmasked; and the profane at length turned serious about his eternal state: secret murders, adulteries, thefts, cheats, and other works of darkness, which defied all human search, discovered and laid open before the world, with their most minute circumstances: no regard had to the rich, no pity shown to the poor: the scales of the world turned; oppressed and despised piety set on high, and prosperous wickedness at last brought low: all not found in Christ, arraigned, convicted, and condemned, without respect of persons, and driven from the tribunal to the pit; while those found in him, at that day, being absolved before the world, go with him into heaven. Nay, but thou canst not so escape. Whoever thou art, not being in Christ, thou must bear a part in this tragical and alarming scene.

Sinner, that same Lord Christ, whom thou now despisest, whom thou woundest through the sides of his messengers, and before whom thou dost prefer thy lusts, will be thy Judge. The neglected Saviour will be a severe Judge. O! what mountain, what rock, wilt thou get to fall on thee, and hide thee from the face of Him who sits on the throne? Thou hast now a rock within thee, a heart of adamant, so that thou canst count the darts of the word as stubble, and laugh at the shaking of the spear: but that rock will rend at the sight of the Judge: that hard heart will then break, and thou wilt weep and wail, when weeping and wailing will be to no purpose. Death's bands will fall off, the grave will cast thee out; and the mountains shall skip from thee, and the rocks refuse to grind thee to powder. How will these cursed eyes abide the sight of the Judge? Behold, he cometh! Where is the profane swearer,

who tore his wounds? The wretched worldling, now abandoned of his God? The formal hypocrite, who kissed him and betrayed him? The despiser of the gospel, who sent him away in his messengers groaning, profaned his ordinances, and trampled under foot his precious blood? O murderer, the slain man is thy Judge: there is he whom thou didst so maltreat. Behold the neglected Lamb of God appearing as a lion against thee. How will thine heart endure the darts of his fiery looks? That rocky heart, which now holds out against him, shall then be blown up; that face, which refuses to blush now, shall then gather blackness: arrows of wrath shall pierce where arrows of conviction cannot enter now. What wilt thou answer him, when he rises up, and charges thee with thy unbelief and impenitence? Wilt thou say, thou wast not warned? Conscience within thee will give thee the lie; the secret groans and weariness of those who warned thee, will witness the contrary. If a child or a fool did tell you that your house was on fire, you would immediately run to quench it: but, in matters of eternal concern, men will first fill their hearts with prejudices against the messengers, and then cast their message behind their backs. But these silly excuses and pretences will not avail in the day of the Lord. How will these cursed ears, now deaf to the call of the gospel, inviting sinners to come to Christ, hear the fearful sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" No sleepy hearer shall be there; no man's heart will then wander; their hearts and eyes will then be fixed on their misery, which they will not now believe. O that we knew, in this our day, the things that belong to our peace!

Lastly, Be exhorted to believe this great truth; and believe it so that you may prepare for the judgment betimes. Set up a secret tribunal in your own breasts, and often call yourselves to an account there. Make the Judge your friend in time, by closing with him in the offer of the gospel; and give all diligence, that you may be found in Christ at that day. Cast off the works of darkness; and live, as believing you are, at all times, and in all places, under the eye of your Judge, who will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing!" Be fruitful in good works, knowing that as you sow, you shall reap. Study piety towards God, righteousness and charity towards men. Lay up in store plenty of works of charity and mercy towards those who are in distress, especially such as are of the household of faith; that they may be produced, at that day, as evidences that you belong to Christ. Shut not up your bowels of mercy, now, towards the needy; lest you then find no mercy. Take heed, that in all your works you be single and sin-

cere; aiming, in them all, at the glory of the Lord, a testimony of your love to him, and in obedience to his command. Leave it to hypocrites, who have their reward, to proclaim every man his own goodness; and to sound a trumpet when they do their alms. It is a base and unchristian spirit, which cannot have satisfaction in a good work unless it be exposed to the view of others: it is utterly unworthy of one who believes that the last trumpet shall call together the whole world, before whom the Judge himself shall publish works truly good, how secretly soever they were done. Live in a believing expectation of the coming of the Lord. Let your loins be always girt, and your lamps burning; so when he comes, whether in the last day of your life, or in the last day of the world, ye shall be able to say with joy, "Lo, this is our God, and we have waited for him."

PART V.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.—MATT. XXV. 34.

HAVING, from this portion of Scripture, which the text is a part of, discoursed of the general judgment; and being to speak of the everlasting happiness of the saints, and the everlasting misery of the wicked, from the respective sentences to be pronounced upon them in the great day, I shall take them in the order wherein they lie before us; and the rather that, as sentence is first passed upon the righteous, so the execution thereof is first begun, though probably the other may be fully executed before it is completed.

The words of the text contain the joyful sentence itself, together with an historical introduction thereto, which gives us an account of the Judge pronouncing the sentence, "the King," Jesus Christ; the parties on whom it is given, "them on his right hand;" and the time when, "then," as soon as the trial is over. Of these I have spoken already. It is the sentence itself we are now to consider, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," &c. Stand back, O ye profane goats! away all unregenerate souls, not united to Jesus Christ! this is not for you. Come, O ye saints, brought out of your natural state into the state of grace! behold here the state of glory awaiting you.

Here is glory let down to us in words and syllables; a looking-glass, in which you may see your everlasting happiness; a scheme or draught of Christ's Father's house, wherein there are many mansions.

This glorious sentence bears two things. 1. The complete happiness to which the saints are adjudged, "the kingdom." 2. Their solemn admission to it, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit," &c.—1. Their complete happiness is a kingdom. A kingdom is the top of worldly felicity; there is nothing on earth greater than a kingdom: therefore the hidden weight of the glory in heaven is held forth to us under that notion. But it is not an ordinary kingdom, it is "the kingdom;" the kingdom of heaven, surpassing all the kingdoms of the earth in glory, honour, profit, and pleasure, infinitely more than they do in these excel the low and inglorious condition of a beggar in rags, and on a dunghill. 2. There is a solemn admission of the saints into this their kingdom, "Come ye, inherit the kingdom." In view of angels, men, and devils, they are invested with royalty, and solemnly inaugurated before the whole world, by Jesus Christ, the heir of all things, who hath "all power in heaven and in earth." Their right to the kingdom is solemnly recognised and owned. They are admitted to it as undoubted heirs of the kingdom, to possess it by inheritance, or lot, as the word properly signifies, because, of old, inheritances were designed by lot, as Canaan to Israel, God's "first-born," as they are called, Exod. iv. 22. And because this kingdom is the Father's kingdom, therefore they are openly acknowledged, in their admission to it, to be the blessed of Christ's Father: which blessing was given them long before this sentence, but it is now solemnly recognised and confirmed to them by the Mediator, in his Father's name. It is observable, he says not, Ye blessed of the Father, but, Ye blessed of my Father; to shew us, that all blessings are derived by us from the Father, the fountain of blessing, as he is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," through whom we are blessed, Eph. i. 3. And, finally, they are admitted to this kingdom, as that which was "prepared for them from the foundation of the world," in God's eternal purpose, before they, or any of them, were; that all the world may see eternal life to be the free gift of God.

Doctrine. The saints shall be made completely happy in the possession of the kingdom of heaven.

Two things I shall here inquire into: I. The nature of this kingdom. II. The admission of the saints thereto. And then I shall make some practical improvement of the whole.

1. As to the nature of the kingdom of heaven, our knowledge of it is very imperfect; for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," 1 Cor. ii. 9. As, by familiar resemblances, parents instruct their little children concerning things of which otherwise they can have no tolerable notion; so our gracious God, in consideration of our weakness, is pleased to represent to us heaven's happiness under similitudes taken from earthly things, glorious in the eyes of men; since discoveries of the heavenly glory, divested of earthly resemblances, would be too bright for our weak eyes, and we should but lose ourselves in them. Wherefore now we can but speak as children of these things, which the day will fully discover.

The state of glory is represented under the idea of a kingdom; a kingdom, among men, being that in which the greatest number of earthly good things centre. Now, every saint shall, as a king, inherit a kingdom. All Christ's subjects shall be kings, each one with his crown upon his head: not that the great King shall divest himself of his royalty, but he will make all his children partakers of his kingdom.

1. The saints shall have kingly power and authority given them. Our Lord gives not empty titles to his favourites; he makes them kings indeed. The dominion of the saints will be a dominion far exceeding that of the greatest monarch who ever was on earth. They will be absolute masters over sin, which had the dominion over them. They will have a complete rule over their own spirits; an entire management of all their affections and inclinations, which now create them so much molestation: the turbulent root of corrupt affections shall be for ever expelled out of that kingdom, and never be able any more to give them the least disturbance. They shall have power over the nations, the ungodly of all nations, "and shall rule them with a rod of iron," Rev. ii. 26, 27. The whole world of the wicked shall be broken before them: "Satan shall be bruised under their feet," Rom. xvi. 20. He shall never be able to fasten a temptation on them any more: but he will be judged by them; and, in their sight, cast with the reprobate crew into the lake of fire and brimstone. So shall they rule over their oppressors. Having fought the good fight, and got the victory, Christ will entertain them as Joshua did his captains, causing them to "come near, and put their feet on the necks of kings," John. x. 24.

2. They shall have the ensigns of royalty. For a throne, Christ will grant them "to sit with him in his throne," Rev. iii. 21. They will be advanced to the highest honour and dignity that they are

capable of; and in the enjoyment of it, they will have an eternal undisturbed repose, after all the tossings which they met with in the world, in their way to the throne. For a crown, they shall "receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away," 1 Pet. v. 4. Not a crown of flowers, as subjects, being conquerors or victors, sometimes have got: such a crown quickly fades, but their crown never fadeth. Not a crown of gold, such as earthly kings wear: even a crown of gold is often stained, and at best can never make those who wear it happy. But it shall be "a crown of glory." A crown of glory is "a crown of life," Rev. iii. 10, that life which knows no end: a crown which death can never make to fall off one's head. It must be an abiding crown; for it is a "crown of righteousness," 2 Tim. iv. 8. It was purchased for them by "Christ's righteousness," which is imputed to them; they are qualified for it by inherent righteousness; God's righteousness, or faithfulness, secures it to them. They shall have "a sceptre, a rod of iron," Rev. ii. 27, terrible to all the wicked world. And a sword too, "a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people," Psalm cxlix. 6, 7. They shall have royal apparel. The royal robes in this kingdom are white robes, Rev. iii. 4, "They shall walk with me in white." Which, in a very particular manner, points at the inconceivable glory of the state of the saints in heaven.

The Lord is pleased often to represent unto us the glorious state of the saints, by speaking of them as clothed in "white garments." It is promised to the conqueror, that he shall be "clothed in white raiment," Rev. iii. v. The elders about the throne are "clothed in white raiment," chap. iv. 4. The multitude before the throne are "clothed with white robes," chap. vii. 9; "arrayed in white robes," ver. 13; "made white in the blood of the Lamb," ver. 14. I own, the last two testimonies respect the state of the saints on earth; yet the terms are borrowed from the state of the church in heaven. All garments, properly so called, being badges of sin and shame, shall be laid aside by the saints when they come to their state of glory. But if we consider on what occasions white garments were wont to be put on, we shall find much of heaven under them.

(1.) The Romans, when they made their bond-servants free, gave them a white garment as a badge of their freedom. So shall the saints that day receive their white robes; for it is the day of "the glorious liberty of the children of God," Rom. viii. 21, the day of "the redemption of their body," ver. 23. They shall no more see the house of bondage, nor lie any more among the pots. If we com-

pare the state of the saints on earth with that of the wicked, it is indeed a state of freedom, whereas the other is a state of slavery: but, in comparison with their state in heaven, it is but a servitude. A saint on earth is indeed a young prince, and heir to the crown; but his motto may be, "I serve;" "for he differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all," Gal. iv. 1. What are the groans of a saint, the sordid and base work which he is sometimes found employed in, the black and tattered garments which he walks in, but badges of this comparative servitude? But from the day the saints come to the crown, they receive their complete freedom, and serve no more. They shall be fully freed from sin, which of all evils is the worst, both in itself, and in their apprehension too; how great then must that freedom be, when these "Egyptians, whom they see to-day," they "shall see them again no more for ever!" They shall be free from all temptation to sin: Satan can have no access to tempt them any more, by himself, or by his agents. A full answer will then be given to that petition they have so often repeated, "Lead us not into temptation." No hissing serpent can come into the paradise above: no snare or trap can be laid there, to catch the feet of the saints: they may walk there without fear, for they can be in no hazard: there are no lions' dens, no mountains of leopards, in the promised land. Nay, they shall be set beyond the possibility of sinning, for they shall be confirmed in goodness. It will be the consummate freedom of their will, to be for ever unalterably determined to good. And they shall be freed from all the effects of sin: "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain," Rev. xxi. 4. What kingdom is like unto this? Death makes its way now into a palace, as easily as into a cottage: sorrow fills the heart of one who wears a crown on his head: royal robes are no defence against pain, and crying by reason of pain. But in this kingdom no misery can have place. All reproaches shall be wiped off; and never shall a tear drop any more from their eyes. They shall not complain of desertions again; the Lord will never hide his face from them: but the Sun of Righteousness shining upon them in his meridian brightness, will dispel all clouds, and give them an everlasting day, without the least mixture of darkness. A deluge of wrath, after a fearful thunder-clap from the throne, will sweep away the wicked from before the judgment-seat, into the lake of fire: but they are, in the first place, like Noah, brought into the ark, and out of harm's way.

(2.) White raiment hath been a token of purity. Therefore "the Lamb's wife is arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," Rev.

xix. 8. And those who stood before the throne "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," chap. vii. 14. The saints shall then put on the robes of perfect purity, and shine in spotless holiness, like the sun in his strength, without the least cloud to intercept his light. Absolute innocence shall then be restored, and every appearance of sin banished far from this kingdom. The guilt of sin, and the reigning power of it are now taken away in the saints; nevertheless, sin dwelleth in them, Rom. vii. 20. But then it shall be no more in them: the corrupt nature will be quite removed; that root of bitterness will be plucked up, and no vestiges of it left in their souls: their nature shall be altogether pure and sinless. There shall be no darkness in their minds; but the understanding of every saint, when he is come to his kingdom, will be as a globe of pure and unmixed light. There shall not be the least aversion to good, nor the least inclination to evil, in their wills; but they will be brought to a perfect conformity to the will of God; blessed with angelic purity, and fixed therein. Their affections shall not be liable to the least disorder or irregularity; it will cost no trouble to keep them right: they will get such a fixed habit of purity, as they can never lose. They will be so refined from all earthly dross, as never to savour more of any thing but of heaven. Were it possible for them to be set again amidst the ensnaring objects of an evil world, they would walk among them without the least defilement; as the sun shines on the dunghill, yet is untainted; and as the angels preserved their purity in the midst of Sodom. Their graces shall then be perfected; and all the imperfection now cleaving to them done away. There will be no more ground for complaints of weakness of grace: none in that kingdom shall complain of an ill heart, or a corrupt nature. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear, we shall be like him," 1 John iii. 2.

(3.) Among the Jews, those who desired to be admitted into the priestly office, being tried, and found to be of the priest's line, and without blemish, were clothed in white, and enrolled among the priests. This seems to be alluded to, Rev. iii. 5, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life." So the saints shall not be kings only, but priests also; for they are a "royal priesthood," 1 Pet. ii. 9. They will be priests upon their thrones. They are judicially found descended from the Great High Priest of their profession, begotten of him by his Spirit, of the incorruptible seed of the word, and without blemish: so the trial being over, they are admitted to be priests in the temple above, that they may dwell in the

house of the Lord for ever. There is nothing upon earth more glorious than a kingdom; nothing more venerable than the priesthood; and both meet together in the glorified state of the saints. "The general assembly of the first-born," Heb. xii. 23, whose is the priesthood and the double portion, appearing in their white robes of glory, will be a reverend and glorious company. That day will shew them to be the persons whom the Lord has chosen out of all the tribes of the earth, to be near unto him, and to enter into his temple, even into his holy place. Their priesthood, begun on earth, shall be brought to its perfection, when they shall be employed in offering the sacrifice of praise to God and the Lamb for ever and ever. They got not their portion in the earth with the rest of the tribes; but the Lord himself was their portion, and will be their double portion, through the ages of eternity.

(4.) They were wont to wear white raiment in a time of triumph; to which also there seems to be an allusion, Rev. iii. 5, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." And what is heaven but an everlasting triumph? None get thither but such as fight, and overcome too. Though Canaan was given to the Israelites as an inheritance, they were required to conquer it, ere they could be possessors of it. The saints, in this world, are in the field of battle; often in red garments, garments rolled in blood: but the day approaches, in which they shall "stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands," Rev. vii. 9, having obtained a complete victory over all their enemies. The palm was used as a sign of victory; because that tree, though oppressed with weights, yet yields not, but rather shooteth upwards. And palm trees were carved on the doors of the most holy place, 1 Kings vi. 32, which was a special type of heaven; for heaven is the place which the saints are received into as conquerors.

Behold the joy and peace of the saints in their white robes! The joys arising from the view of past dangers, and of riches and honours gained at the very door of death, doth most sensibily touch one's heart: and this will be an ingredient in the everlasting happiness of the saints, which could have had no place in the heaven of innocent Adam, and his sinless offspring, supposing him to have stood. Surely the glorified saints will not forget the entertainment which they met with in the world; it will be to the glory of God to remember it, and will also heighten their joy. The Sicilian king, by birth the son of a potter, acted a wise part, in that he would be served at his table with earthen vessels; which could not but put an additional sweetness in his meals, not to be relished by one born

heir to the crown. Can ever meat be so sweet to any as to the hungry man? Or can any have such a relish of plenty as he who has been under pinching straits? The more difficulties the saints have passed through in their way to heaven, the place will be the sweeter to them when they come to it. Every happy stroke, struck in the spiritual warfare, will be a jewel in their crown of glory. Each victory obtained against sin, Satan, and the world, will raise their triumphant joy the higher. The remembrance of the cross will sweeten the crown; and the remembrance of their travel through the wilderness, will put an additional verdure on the fields of glory; while they walk through them, looking back on the day when they went mourning without the sun.

And now that they appear triumphing in white robes, it is a sign they have obtained an honourable peace; such a peace as their enemies can disturb no more. So every thing peculiarly adapted to their militant condition is laid aside. The sword is laid down; and they betake themselves to the pen of a ready writer, to commemorate the praises of Him by whom they overcame. Public ordinances, preaching, sacraments, shall be honourably laid aside; there is no temple there, Rev. xxi. 22. On earth these were sweet to them: but the travellers being all got home, the inns, appointed for their entertainment by the way, are shut up; the candles are put out when the sun is risen; and the tabernacle used in the wilderness is folded up, when the temple of glory is come in its room. Many of the saints' duties will then be laid aside, as one gives his staff out of his hand, when he is come to the end of his journey. Praying shall then be turned to praising: and there being no sin to confess, no wants to seek the supply of, confession and petition shall be swallowed up in everlasting thanksgiving. There will be no mourning in heaven. They have sown in tears: the reaping time of joy is come, and, "God shall wipe all tears from their eyes," Rev. xxi. 4. No need of mortification there; and self-examination is then at an end. They will not need to watch any more; the danger is over. Patience has had its perfect work, and there is no use for it there. Faith is turned into sight, and hope is swallowed up in the ocean of sensible and full enjoyment. All the rebels are subdued, and the saints quietly sit on their throne; and so the forces, needful in the time of the spiritual warfare, are disbanded; and they carry on their triumph in the profoundest peace.

(5.) White garments were worn on festival days, in token of joy. And so shall the saints be clothed in white raiment; for they shall keep an everlasting Sabbath to the Lord, Heb. iv. 9, "There remaineth therefore a rest," or keeping of a Sabbath, "to the people

of God." The Sabbath, in the esteem of saints, is the queen of days: and they shall have an endless Sabbatism in the kingdom of heaven; so shall their garments be always white. They will have an eternal rest, with an uninterrupted joy: for heaven is not a resting place, where men may sleep out an eternity; there they rest not day nor night, but their work is their rest, and continual recreation; and toil and weariness have no place there. They rest there in God, who is the centre of their souls. Here they find the completion, or satisfaction, of all their desires; having the full enjoyment of God, and uninterrupted communion with him. This is the point, unto which, till the soul come, it will always be restless: but that point reached, it rests; for he is at the last end, and the soul can go no farther. It cannot understand, will, nor desire more; but in him it has what is commensurable to its boundless desires. This is the happy end of all the labours of the saints; their toil and sorrows issue in a joyful rest. The Chaldeans, measuring the natural day, put the day first, and the night last: but the Jews counted the night first, and the day last. Even so the wicked begin with a day of rest and pleasure, but end with a night of everlasting toil and sorrow: but God's people have their gloomy night first, and then comes their day of eternal rest. Which Abraham, in the parable, observed to the rich man in hell, Luke xvi. 25, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

3. If any inquire where the kingdom of the saints lies? it is not in this world; it lies in a better country, "that is, an heavenly," Heb. xi. 16, a country better than the best of this world; namely, the heavenly Canaan, Immanuel's land, where nothing is wanting to complete the happiness of the inhabitants. This is the happy country; blessed with a perpetual spring, and which yieldeth all things for necessity, convenience, and delight. There men shall eat angels' food; they shall be entertained with the hidden manna, Rev. ii. 17, without being set to the painful task of gathering it: they will be fed to the full, with the product of the land falling into their mouths, without the least toil to them. That land enjoys everlasting day, for there is "no night there," Rev. xxi. 25. Eternal sunshine beautifies this better country, but there is no scorching heat there. No clouds shall be seen there for ever: yet it is not a land of drought; the trees of the Lord's planting are set by the rivers of water, and shall never want moisture, for they will have an eternal supply of the Spirit, by Jesus Christ, from his Father. This is the only country, from whence our Lord came, and whither he is gone

again; the country which all the holy patriarchs and prophets had their eye upon while on earth; and which all the saints, who have gone before us, have fought their way to; and unto which the martyrs have joyfully swam through a sea of blood. This earth is the place of the saint's pilgrimage; that is their country, where they find their everlasting rest.

4. The royal city, is that great city, the holy Jerusalem, described at large, Rev. xxi. 10, to the end of the chapter. It is true, some learned divines place this city in the earth: but the particulars of this description seem to me to favour those most, who point us to the other world for it. The saints shall reign in that city, whose wall is of "jasper," ver. 18; and the foundations of the wall garnished with all manner of precious stones," ver. 19; and "the street of pure gold," ver. 21. So that their feet shall be set on that which the men of this world set their hearts upon. This is the city which God "has prepared for them," Heb. xi. 16; "a city that hath foundations," ver. 10; "a continuing city," chap. xiii. 14, which shall stand and flourish, when all the cities of the world are laid in ashes; and which shall not be moved, when the foundations of the world are overturned. It is a city that never changes its inhabitants: none of them shall ever be removed out of it; for life and immortality reign there, and no death can enter into it. It is blessed with a perfect and perpetual peace, and can never be in the least disturbed. Nothing from without can annoy it; the gates therefore are not shut at all by day, and there is no night there, Rev. xxi. 25. There can nothing from within trouble it. No want of provision there, no scarcity; no discord among the inhabitants. Whatever contentions are among the saints now, no vestige of their former jarrings shall remain there. Love to God, and to one another, shall be perfected; and those of them who stood at the greatest distance here, will joyfully embrace and delight in one another there.

5. The royal palace is Christ's Father's house, in which "are many mansions," John xiv. 2. There shall the saints dwell for ever. This is the house prepared for all the heirs of glory, even those of them who dwell in the meanest cottage now, or have not where to lay their heads. As the Lord calls his saints to a kingdom, he will provide them a house suitable to the dignity he puts upon them. Heaven will be a convenient, spacious, and glorious house, for those whom the King delights to honour. Never was a house purchased at so great a rate as this, being the purchase of the Mediator's blood; and for no less could it be afforded to them: never was there so much to do, to fit the inhabitants for a house. The saints were, by nature utterly unfit for this house, and human art and industry

could not make them meet for it. But the Father gives the designed inhabitants to the Son, to be by him redeemed: the Son pays the price of their redemption, even his own precious blood; justice gives them access to the house; and the Holy Spirit sanctifies them by his grace; that they may be meet to come in thither, where no unclean thing can enter. And no wonder, for it is the King's palace they enter into, Psalm xlv. 15; the house of the kingdom, where the great King keeps his court, where he has set his throne, and shews forth his glory, in a singular manner, beyond what mortals can conceive.

6. Paradise is their palace garden. "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise," said our Saviour to the penitent thief on the cross, Luke xxiii. 43. Heaven is a paradise for pleasure and delight, where there is both wood and water: "A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb; and on either side of the river, the tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruits every month, Rev. xxii. 1, 2. How happy might innocent Adam have been in the earthly paradise, where there was nothing wanting for use or delight!—Eden was the most pleasant spot of the uncorrupted earth and paradise the most pleasant spot of Eden: but what is earth in comparison of heaven? The glorified saints are advanced to the heavenly paradise. There they shall not only see, but "eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God," Rev. ii. 7. They shall behold the Mediator's glory, and be satisfied with his goodness. No flaming sword shall be there, to keep the way of that tree of life; but they shall freely eat of it, and live for ever. They shall "drink of the river of pleasures," Psalm xxxvi. 8, the sweetest and purest pleasures which Immanuel's land affords, and shall swim in an ocean of unmixed delight for evermore.

7. They shall have royal treasures, sufficient to support the dignity to which they are advanced. Since the street of the royal city is pure gold, and the twelve gates thereof are twelve pearls: their treasure must be of that which is better than gold or pearl. It is an "eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17. O precious treasure! a treasure not liable to insensible corruption, by moths or rust; a treasure which none can steal from them, Matt. vi. 20. Never did any kingdom afford such a precious treasure, nor a treasure of such variety; for "he that overcometh, shall inherit all things," Rev. xxi. 7. No treasures on earth are stored with all things: if they were all put together in one, there would be far more valuable things wanting in that one, than found in it.—This then is the peculiar treasure of the kings who inherit the kingdom of heaven. They

shall want nothing that may contribute to their full satisfaction. Now they are rich in hope; but then they will have their riches in hand. Now all things are theirs in respect of right; then all shall be theirs in possession. They may go for ever through Immanuel's land, and behold the glory and riches thereof, with the satisfying thought, that all they see is their own. It is a pity those should ever be uneasy under the want of earthly good things, who may be sure they shall inherit all things at length.

8. Though there is no material temple therein, no serving of God in the use af ordinances, as here on earth; yet, as for this kingdom, "The Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it," Rev. xxi. 22. As the temple was the glory of Canaan, so will the celestial temple be the glory of heaven. The saints shall be brought in thither as a royal priesthood, to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever; for Jesus Christ will then make every saint "a pillar in the temple of God, and he shall go no more out," Rev. iii. 12, as the priests and Levites did, in their courses, go out of the material temple. There the saints shall have the cloud of glory, the divine presence, with most intimate, uninterrupted communion with God: there they shall have Jesus Christ, as the true ark, wherein the fiery law shall be for ever hid from their eyes: and the mercy-seat, from which nothing shall be breathed but everlasting peace and good will towards them: the cherubim, the society of holy angels, who shall join with them in eternal admiration of the mystery of Christ: the golden candlestick, with its seven lamps, for "the glory of God" doth "lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof," Rev. xxi. 23: the incense altar, in the intercession of Christ, who "ever liveth to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 25, eternally exhibiting the manner of his death and suffering, and efficaciously willing for ever, that those whom the Father hath given him, be with him: and the shewbread table, in the perpetual feast they shall have together in the enjoyment of God. This leads me more particularly to consider,

9. The society in this kingdom. What would royal power and authority, ensigns of royalty, richest treasures, and all other advantages of a kingdom, avail, without comfortable society? Some crowned heads have had but a wretched life, through the want of it: their palaces have been unto them as prisons, and their badges of honour, as chains on a prisoner: while, hated of all, they had none they could trust in, or whom they could have comfortable fellowship with. But the chief part of heaven's happiness lies in the blessed society which the saints shall have there.

(1.) The society of the saints, among themselves, will be no small

part of heaven's happiness. The communion of saints on earth is highly prized by all those who are travelling through the world to Zion; and companions in sin can never have such true pleasure and delight in one another, as sometimes the Lord's people have in praying together, and in conversing about those things which the world is a stranger to. Here the saints are but few in a company at best: and some of them are so situated, as that they seem to themselves to dwell alone having no access to such as they would freely embosom themselves to, in spiritual matters, they sigh and say, "Wo is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer-fruits—there is no cluster to eat—the good man is perished out of the earth," Micah vii. 1, 2. But in the general assembly of the first born in heaven, none of all the saints, who ever were or will be on the earth, shall be missing. They will be all of them together in one place, all possess one kingdom, and all sit down together to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Here the best of the saints want not their sinful imperfections, making their society less comfortable: but there they shall be perfect, without "spot or wrinkle, or any such thing," Eph. v. 27. All natural, as well as sinful imperfections, will be done away; they "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament," Dan. xii. 3.

There we shall see Adam and Eve in the heavenly paradise freely eating of the tree of life; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the holy patriarchs, no more wandering from land to land, but come to their everlasting rest; all the prophets feasting their eyes on the glory of Him, of whose coming they prophesied; the twelve apostles of the Lamb, sitting on their twelve thrones; all the holy martyrs in their long white robes, with their crowns on their heads; the godly kings advanced to a kingdom which cannot be moved; and those that turn many to righteousness, shining as the stars for ever and ever. There we shall see our godly friends, relations, and acquaintances, pillars in the temple of God, to go no more out from us. And it is more than probable, that the saints will know one another in heaven; at least they will know their friends, relatives, and those they were acquainted with on earth, and such as have been most eminent in the Church; yet that knowledge will be purified from all earthly thoughts and affections. This seems to be included in that perfection of happiness to which the saints shall be advanced. If Adam knew who and what Eve was, at first sight, when the Lord God brought her to him, Gen. ii. 23, 54, why should one question but husbands and wives, parents and children, will know each other in glory? If the Thessalonians, converted by Paul's ministry, shall be his "crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at

his coming," 1 Thess. ii. 19, why may we not conclude, that ministers shall know their people, and people their ministers, in heaven? And if the disciples, on the mount of transfiguration, knew Moses and Elias, whom they had never seen before, Matth. xvii. 4, we have reason to think that we shall know them too, and such as them, when we come to heaven. The communion of saints shall be most intimate there; "they shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven," Matt. viii. 11. Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, Luke xvi. 23; which denotes most intimate and familiar society. And though diversity of tongues shall cease. 1 Cor. xiii. 8, I make no question, but there will be the use of speech in heaven; and that the saints will glorify God in their bodies there, as well as in their spirits, speaking forth his praises with an audible voice. As for the language, we shall understand what it is, when we come thither. When Paul was caught up to the third heaven, the seat of the blessed, he heard there unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter, 2 Cor. xii. 4. Moses and Elias, on the mount with Christ, "talked with him," Matt. xvii. 3, and "spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem," Luke ix. 31.

(2.) The saints will have the society of all the holy angels there. An innumerable company of angels shall be companions to them in their glorified state. Happy were the shepherds who heard the song of the heavenly host when Christ was born! but thrice happy they, who shall join their voices with them in the choir of saints and angels in heaven, when he shall be glorified in all who shall be about him there! Then shall we be brought acquainted with those blessed spirits, who never sinned. How bright will these morning stars shine in the holy place! they were ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation: loved them for their Lord and Master's sake; encamped round about them, to preserve them from danger: how joyfully will they welcome them to their everlasting habitations; and rejoice to see them come at length to their kingdom, as the tutor doth in the prosperity of his pupils! The saints shall be no more afraid of them, as at times they were wont to be: they shall then have put off mortality, and the infirmities of the flesh, and be themselves as the angels of God, fit to enjoy communion and fellowship with them. And both being brought under one head, the Lord Jesus Christ, they shall join in the praises of God and of the Lamb, "saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," &c. Rev. v. 11, 12. Whether the angels shall, as some think, assume ethereal bodies, that they may be seen by the bodily eyes of the saints, and be in a nearer capacity to converse with them, I know

not: but, as they want not ways of converse among themselves, we have reason to think, that conversation between them and the saints shall not be for ever blocked up.

(3.) They shall have society with the Lord himself in heaven, glorious communion with God in Christ, which is the perfection of happiness. I choose to speak of communion with God and the man Christ, together; because, as we derive our grace from the Lamb so we shall derive our glory from him too, the man Christ being, if I may be allowed the expression, the centre of the divine glory in heaven, from whence it is diffused unto all the saints. This seems to be taught us by the Scriptures which express heaven's happiness by "being with Christ," Luke xxiii. 43, "This day thou shalt be with me in paradise." John xvii. 24, "Father, I will that these also, whom thou hast given me, be with me," and remarkably to this purpose is what follows, "that they may behold my glory." 1 Thess. iv. 17, "So shall we be ever with the Lord," that is, the Lord Christ, whom we shall meet in the air. This also seems to be the import of the Scriptures, wherein God and the Lamb, the slain Saviour, are jointly spoken of, in point of the happiness of the saints in heaven, Rev. vii. 17, "For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Chap. xxi. 3, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them," as in a tabernacle, so the word signifies, that is, in the flesh of Christ: compare John i. 14; and ver. 22, "The Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the temple of it." Here lies the chief happiness of the saints in heaven, without which they never could be happy, though lodged in that glorious place, and blessed with the society of angels there. What I will venture to say of it, shall be comprised in three things:

First, The saints in heaven shall have the glorious presence of God, and of the Lamb: God himself shall be with them, Rev. xxi. 3, and they shall ever be with the Lord. God is every where present in respect of his essence: the saints militant have his special gracious presence; but in heaven they have his glorious presence. There they are brought near to the throne of the great King, and stand before him, where he shews his inconceivable glory. There they have the tabernacle of God, on which the cloud of glory rests, the all-glorious human nature of Christ, wherein the fulness of the Godhead dwells; not vailed, as in the days of his humiliation, but shining through that blessed flesh, that all his saints may behold his glory, and making that body more glorious than a thousand suns: so that the city has no need of the sun, nor of the moon, but

"the glory of God doth lighten it, and the lamb is the light thereof," properly "the candle thereof," Rev. xxi. 23, that is, the Lamb is the luminary or luminous body, which gives light to the city; as the sun and moon now give light to the world, or as a candle lightens a dark room: and the light proceeding from that glorious luminary of the city, is the glory of God. Sometimes on earth that candle burns very dimly, it was hid under a bushel, in the time of his humiliation; only now and then it darted out some rays of this light, which dazzled the eyes of the spectators: but now it is set on high, in the city of God, where it shines, and shall shine for ever, in perfection of glory. It was sometimes laid aside, as a stone disallowed of the builders: but now it is and for ever will be, "the light," or luminary of that city; and that, "like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal," ver. 11.

Who can conceive the happiness of the saints in the presence chamber of the great King, where he sits in his chair of state, making his glory eminently to appear in the man Christ? His gracious presence makes a mighty change upon the saints in this world: his glorious presence in heaven, then, must needs raise their graces to perfection, and elevate their capacities. The saints experience that the presence of God, now with them in his grace, can make a little heaven of a sort of hell. How great then must the glory of heaven be, by his presence there in his glory! If a candle, in some sort, beautifies a cottage or prison, how will the shining sun beautify a palace or paradise! The gracious presence of God made a wilderness lightsome to Moses; the valley of the shadow of death, to David; a fiery furnace, to the three children: what a ravishing beauty then shall arise from the Sun of righteousness, shining in his meridian brightness on the street of the city paved with pure gold! This glorious presence of God in heaven, will put a glory on the saints themselves. The most pleasing garden is devoid of beauty, when the darkness of the night sits down on it; but the shining sun puts a glory on the blackest mountains: so those who are now as bottles in the smoke, when set in the glorious presence of God, will be glorious both in soul and body.

Secondly, The saints in heaven shall have the full enjoyment of God and of the Lamb. This is it that perfectly satisfies the rational creature; and here is the saints' everlasting rest. This will make up all their wants, and fill the desires of their souls, which, after all here obtained, still cry, "Give, give," not without some anxiety; because, though they do enjoy God, yet they do not enjoy him fully. As to the way and manner of this enjoyment, our Lord tells us, John xvii. 3, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee,

the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." Now there are two ways, in which a desirable object is known most perfectly and satisfyingly; the one is by sight, the other by experience: sight satisfies the understanding, and experience satisfies the will. Accordingly, one may say, that the saints enjoy God and the Lamb in heaven, 1. By an intuitive knowledge; 2. By an experimental knowledge; both of them perfect, I mean, in respect of the capacity of the creature; for otherwise a creature's perfect knowledge of an infinite Being is impossible. The saints below enjoy God, in that knowledge they have of him by report, from his holy word, which they believe; they see him likewise darkly in the glass of ordinances, which do, as it were, represent the Bridegroom's picture, or shadow, while he is absent: they have also some experimental knowledge of him; they taste that God is good, and that the Lord is gracious. But the saints above shall not need a good report of the King, they shall see him; therefore faith ceaseth: they will behold his own face; therefore ordinances are no more: there is no need of a glass. They shall drink, and drink abundantly, of that whereof they have tasted; and so hope ceaseth, for they are at the utmost bounds of their desires.

(1.) The saints in heaven shall enjoy God and the Lamb, by sight, and that in a most perfect manner, 1 Cor. xiii. 12, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face." Here our sight is but mediate, as by a glass, in which we see not things themselves, but the images of things! but there we shall have an immedate view of God and the Lamb. Here our knowledge is but obscure: there it shall be clear, without the least mixture of darkness. The Lord now converses with his saints through the lattices of ordinances; but then shall they be in the presence chamber with him. There is a veil now on the glorious face, as to us: but when we come to the upper house, that veil, through which some rays of beauty are now darted, will be found entirely taken off; and then shall glorious excellencies and perfections, not seen in him by mortals, be clearly discovered, for we shall see his face, Rev. xxii. 4. The phrase seems to be borrowed from the honour put on some in the courts of monarchs, to be attendants on the king's person. We read, Jer. lii. 25, of "seven men that were" (Heb. "seers of the king's face," that is as we read it,) "near the king's person." O unspeakable glory! the great king keeps his court in heaven: and the saints shall all be his courtiers ever near the king's person, seeing his face. "The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face," Rev. xxii. 3, 4.

They shall see Jesus Christ, God and man with their bodily eyes,

as he will never lay aside the human nature. They will behold that glorious blessed body, which is personally united to the divine nature, and exalted above principalities and powers, and every name that is named. There we shall see, with our eyes, that very body which was born of Mary at Bethlehem, and crucified at Jerusalem between two thieves: the blessed head, that was crowned with thorns; the face, that was spit upon; the hands and feet, that were nailed to the cross; all shining with inconceivable glory. The glory of the man Christ will attract the eyes of all the saints, and he will be for ever admitted in all them that believe, 2 Thess. i. 10. Were each star in the heavens shining as the sun in its meridian brightness, and the light of the sun so increased, as the stars, in that case, should bear the same proportion to the sun, in point of light, that they do now; it might possibly be some faint resemblance of the glory of the man Christ, in comparison with that of the saints; for though the saints "shine forth as the sun," yet not they, but the Lamb shall be "the light of the city." The wise men fell down, and worshipped him, when they saw him "a young child, with Mary his mother in the house." But O what a ravishing sight will it be to see him in his kingdom, on his throne, at the Father's right hand! "The Word was made flesh," John i. 14, and the glory of God shall shine through that flesh, and the joys of heaven spring out from it, unto the saints, who shall see and enjoy God in Christ. For since the union between Christ and the saints is never dissolved, but they continue his members for ever; and the members cannot draw their life, but from their head; seeing that which is independent on the head, as to vital influence, is no member; therefore Jesus Christ will remain the everlasting bond of union betwixt God and the saints; from whence their eternal life shall spring, John xvii. 2, 3, "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God," &c. Ver. 22, 23, "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." Wherefore the immediate enjoyment of God in heaven, is to be understood in respect of the laying aside of word and sacraments, and such external means, as we enjoy God by in this world; but not as if the saints should then cast off their dependence on their Head for vital influences: nay, "the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters," Rev. vii. 17.

Now when we shall behold him, who died for us, that we might

live for evermore, whose matchless love made him swim through the Red Sea of God's wrath, to make a path in the midst of it for us, by which we might pass safely to Canaan's land; then we shall see what a glorious one he was, who suffered all this for us; what entertainment he had in the upper house; what hallelujahs of angels could not hinder him to hear the groans of a perishing multitude on earth, and to come down for their help; and what glory he laid aside for us. Then shall we be more "able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," Eph. iii. 18, 19. When the saints shall remember, that the waters of wrath which he was plunged into, are the wells of salvation from whence they draw all their joy; that they have got the cup of salvation in exchange for the cup of wrath his Father gave him to drink, which his sinless human nature shivered at; how will their hearts leap within them, burn with seraphic love, like coals of juniper, and the arch of heaven ring with their songs of salvation! The Jews, celebrating the feast of tabernacles, which was the most joyful of all their feasts, and lasted seven days, went once every day about the altar, singing hosanna, with their myrtle, palm, and willow branches in their hands, the two former signs of victory, the last, of chastity, in the meantime bending their boughs towards the altar. When the saints are presented as a chaste virgin to Christ, and as conquerors have got their palms in their hands, how joyfully will they compass the altar evermore, and sing their hosannas, or rather their hallelujahs about it, bending their palms towards it, acknowledging themselves to owe all unto the Lamb that was slain, and who redeemed them with his blood! To this agrees what John saw, Rev. vii. 9, 10, "A great multitude—stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

They shall see God, Matt. v. 8. They will be happy in seeing the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, not with their bodily eyes, in respect of which God is invisible, 1 Tim. i. 17, but with the eyes of their understanding; being blessed with the most perfect, full, and clear knowledge of God, and divine things, which the creature is capable of. This is called the beatific vision, and is the perfection of understanding, the utmost term thereof. It is but an obscure delineation of the glory of God, that mortals can have on earth; a sight, as it were, of "his back parts," Exod. xxxiii. 23. But there they will see his face, Rev. xxii. 4. They shall see him in the fulness of his glory, and behold him fixedly; whereas it is but a passing view they

can have of him here, Exod. xxxiv. 6. There is a vast difference between the sight of a king in his undress, quickly passing by us; and a fixed leisurely view of him, sitting on his throne in his royal robes, his crown on his head, and his sceptre in his hand: such a difference will there be, between the greatest manifestation of God that ever a saint had on earth, and the display of his glory in heaven. There the saints shall eternally, without interruption, feast their eyes upon him, and be ever viewing his glorious perfections. And as their bodily eyes shall be strengthened, and fitted to behold the glorious majesty of the man Christ; as eagles gaze on the sun, without being blinded thereby; so their minds shall have such an elevation, as will fit them to see God in his glory: their capacities shall be enlarged, according to the measure in which he shall be pleased to communicate himself unto them, for their complete happiness.

This blissful sight of God being quite above our present capacities, we must needs be much in the dark about it. But it seems to be something else than the sight of that glory, which we shall see with our bodily eyes, in the saints, and in the man Christ, or any other splendour or refulgence from the Godhead whatever; for no created thing can be our chief good and happiness, nor fully satisfy our souls; and it is plain that these things are somewhat different from God himself. Therefore I conceive, that the souls of the saints shall see God himself: so the Scriptures teach us, that we shall "see face to face, and know even as we are known," 1 Cor. xiii. 12; and that "we shall see him as he is," 1 John iii. 2. Yet the saints can never have an adequate conception of God: they cannot comprehend that which is infinite. They may touch the mountain, but cannot grasp it in their arms. They cannot, with one glance of their eye, behold what grows on every side: but the divine perfections will be an unbounded field, in which the glorified shall walk eternally, seeing more and more of God; since they can never come to the end of that which is infinite. They may bring their vessels to this ocean every moment, and fill them with new waters.—What a ravishing sight would it be, to see all the perfections, and lovely qualities, that are scattered here and there among the creatures, gathered together into one! But even such a sight would be infinitely below this blissful sight the saints shall have in heaven. For they shall see God, in whom all these perfections shall eminently appear infinitely more, whereof there is no vestige to be found in the creatures. In him shall they see every thing desirable, and nothing but what is desirable.

Then shall they be perfectly satisfied as to the love of God to-

wards them, which they are now ready to question on every turn. They will no more find any difficulty to persuade themselves of it, by marks, signs, and testimonies: they will have an intuitive knowledge of it. They shall, with the profoundest reverence be it spoken, look into the heart of God, and there see the love he bore to them from all eternity, and the love and goodness he will bear to them for evermore. The glorified shall have a most clear and distinct understanding of divine truths, for in his light we shall see light, Psalm xxxvi. 9. The light of glory will be a complete commentary on the Bible, and untie all the hard and knotty questions in divinity. There is no joy on earth, comparable to that which arises from the discovery of truth, no discovery of truth comparable to the discovery of Scripture truth, made by the Spirit of the Lord unto the soul. "I rejoice at thy word," says the psalmist, "as one that findeth great spoil," Psalm cxix. 162. Yet, while here, it is but an imperfect discovery. How ravishing then will it be, to see the opening of all the treasure hid in that field! They shall also be led into the understanding of the works of God. The beauty of the works of creation and providence will then be set in due light. Natural knowledge will be brought to perfection by the light of glory. The web of providence, concerning the church, and all men whatever, will then be cut out, and laid before the eyes of the saints: and it will appear a most beautiful mixture; so as they shall all say togethee, on the view of it, "He hath done all things well." But, in a special manner, the work of redemption shall be the eternal wonder of the saints, and they will admire and praise the glorious contrivance for ever. Then shall they get a full view of its suitableness to the divine perfections, and to the case of sinners; and clearly read the covenant that passed between the Father and the Son, from all eternity, concerning their salvation. They shall for ever wonder and praise, and praise and wonder, at the mystery of wisdom and love, goodness and holiness, mercy and justice, appearing in the glorious scheme. Their souls shall be eternally satisfied with the sight of God himself, of their election by the Father, their redemption by the Son, and application thereof to them by the Holy Spirit.

(2.) The saints in heaven shall enjoy God in Christ by experimental knowledge, which is, when the object itself is given and possessed. This is the participation of the divine goodness in full measure; which is the perfection of the will, and utmost term thereof. "The Lamb shall lead them unto living fountains of waters," Rev. vii. 17. These are no other but God himself, "the fountain of living waters," who will fully and freely communicate himself unto them. He will pour out of his goodness eternally into their souls: then

shall they have a most lively sensation, in the innermost part of their souls, of all that goodness they heard of, and believe to be in him, and of what they shall see in him by the light of glory. This will be an everlasting practical exposition of that word, which men and angels cannot sufficiently unfold, to wit, God himself shall—"be their God," Rev. xxi. 3. God will communicate himself unto them fully: they will no more be set to taste of the streams of divine goodness in ordinances, as they were wont, but shall drink at the fountain head. They will be no more entertained with sips and drops, but filled with all the fulness of God. And this will be the entertainment of every saint: for, though in created things, what is given to one is withheld from another; yet this infinite good can fully communicate itself to all, and fill all. Those who are heirs of God, the great heritage, shall then enter into a full possession of their inheritance: and the Lord will open his treasures of goodness unto them, that their enjoyment may be full. They shall not be stinted to any measure: but the enjoyment shall go as far as their enlarged capacities can reach. As a narrow vessel cannot contain the ocean, so neither can the finite creature comprehend the infinite good: but no measure shall be set to the enjoyment, but what ariseth from the capacity of the creature. So that, although there be degrees of glory, yet all shall be filled, and have what they can hold; though some will be able to hold more than others. There will be no want to any of them; all shall be fully satisfied, and perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of divine goodness, according to their enlarged capacities: as when bottles of different sizes are filled, some contain more, others less; yet all of them have what they can contain. The glorified shall have all in God, for the satisfaction of all their desires. No created thing can afford satisfaction to all our desires; clothes may warm us, but they cannot feed us; the light is comfortable, but cannot nourish us: but in God we shall have all our desires, and we shall desire nothing without him. They shall be the happy ones, that desire nothing but what is truly desirable; they shall have all they desire. God will be all in all to the saints: he will be their life, health, riches, honour, peace, and all good things. He will communicate himself freely to them: the door of access to him shall never be shut again for one moment. They may, when they will, take of the fruits of the tree of life, for they will find it on each side of the river, Rev. xxii. 2. There will be no veil between God and them, to be drawn aside; but his fulness shall never stand open to them. No door to nock at in heaven; no asking to go before receiving; the Lord will allow his people an unrestrained familiarity with himself there.

Now they are in part made "partakers of the divine nature!" but then they shall perfectly partake of it; that is to say, God will communicate to them his own image, make all his goodness not only pass before them, but pass into them, and stamp the image of all his own perfections upon them, so far as the creature is capable of receiving the same; from whence shall result a perfect likeness to him in all things in or about them; which completes the happiness of the creature. This is what the psalmist seems to have had in view, Psalm. xvii. 15, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness;" the perfection of God's image following upon the beatific vision. And so says John, 1 John iii. 2, "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Hence there shall be a most close and intimate union between God and the saints: God shall be in them, and they in God, in a glorious and most perfect union: for then shall their dwelling in love be made perfect. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him," 1 John iv. 16. How will the saints be united to God and he to them, when he shall see nothing in them but his own image; when their love shall arrive at its perfection, no nature but the divine nature being left in them; and all imperfection being swallowed up in their glorious transformation into the likeness of God! Their love to the Lord, being purified from the dross of self-love, shall be most pure; so as they shall love nothing but God, and in God. It shall no more be faint and languishing, but burn like coals of juniper. It will be a light without darkness, a flaming fire without smoke. As the live coal, when all the moisture is gone out of it, is all fire, so will the saints be all love, when they come to the full enjoyment of God in heaven, by intuitive and experimental knowledge of him, by sight and full participation of the divine goodness.

Thirdly, From this glorious presence and enjoyment shall arise an unspeakable joy, which the saints shall be filled with. "In thy presence is fulness of joy," Psalm xvi. 11. The saints sometimes enjoy God in the world; but when their eyes are held, so as not to perceive it, they have not the comfort of the enjoyment: but then, all mistakes being removed, they shall not only enjoy God, but rest in the enjoyment with inexpressible delight and satisfaction. The desire of earthly things causes torment, and the enjoyment of them often ends in loathing. But though the glorified saints shall ever desire more and more of God, their desires shall not be mixed with the least anxiety, since the fulness of the Godhead stands always open to them; therefore they shall hunger no more, they shall not have the least uneasiness in their eternal appetite after the hidden

manna; neither shall continued enjoyment cause loathing; they shall never think they have too much; therefore it is added, "neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat," Rev. vii. 16. The enjoyment of God and the Lamb will be ever fresh and new to them, through the ages of eternity: for they shall drink of living fountains of waters, where new waters are continually springing up in abundance, ver. 17. They shall eat of the tree of life, which, for variety, affords twelve manner of fruits, and these always new and fresh, for it yields every month, Rev. xxii. 2. Their joy shall be pure and unmixed, without any dregs of sorrow; not slight and momentary, but solid and everlasting, without interruption. They will enter into joy, Matt. xxv. 21, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The expression is somewhat unusual, and brings to my recollection this word of our suffering Redeemer, Mark xiv. 34, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death." His soul was beset with sorrows, as the word there used will bear; the floods of sorrow went round about him, encompassing him on every hand: wherever he turned his eyes, sorrow was before him; it flowed in upon him from heaven, earth, and hell, all at once: thus was he entered into sorrow, and therefore saith, Psalm lxix. 2, "I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." Now, wherefore all this, but that his own might enter into joy? Joy sometimes enters into us now, but has much to do to get access, while we are encompassed with sorrows: but then joy shall not only enter into us, but we shall enter into it, and swim for ever in an ocean of joy, where we shall see nothing but joy wherever we turn our eyes. The presence and enjoyment of God and the Lamb will satisfy us with pleasures for evermore: and the glory of our souls and bodies, arising from thence, will afford us everlasting delight. The spirit of heaviness, how closely soever it cleaves to any of the saints now, shall drop off then: their weeping shall be turned into songs of joy, and bottles of tears shall issue in rivers of pleasure. Happy they who now sow in tears, which shall spring up in joy in heaven, and will encircle their heads with a weight of glory.

Thus far of the society in this kingdom of the saints.

10. In the last place, the kingdom shall endure for ever. As every thing in it is eternal, so the saints shall have undoubted certainty, and full assurance, of the eternal duration of the same. This is a necessary ingredient in perfect happiness; for the least uncertainty as to the continuance of any good with one, is not without some fear, anxiety, and torment; and therefore is utterly inconsistent with perfect happiness. But the glorified shall never have fear, nor

cause of fear, of any loss: they shall be "ever with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 17. They shall all attain the full persuasion, that nothing shall be able to separate them from the love of God, nor from the full enjoyment of him for ever. The inheritance "reserved in heaven is incorruptible;" it hath no principle of corruption in itself, to make it liable to decay, but endures for evermore: it is undefiled; nothing from without can mar its beauty, nor is there any thing in itself to offend those who enjoy it. Therefore it fadeth not away; but ever remains in its native lustre, and primitive beauty, 1 Pet. i. 4. Hitherto of the nature of the kingdom of heaven.

II. We now proceed to speak of the admission of the saints into this their new kingdom. I shall briefly touch upon two things: 1. The formal admission, in the call upon them from the Judge to come into their kingdom. 2. The equality in which they are admitted and introduced to it.

1. Their admission, the text shews to be, by a voice from the throne: the King calling to them, from the throne, before angels and men, to come to their kingdom. Come and Go are but short words: but they will be such as will afford matter of thought to all mankind, through the ages of eternity; since everlasting happiness turns upon one, and everlasting misery on the other.

Now, our Lord bids the worst of sinners, who hear the gospel, Come; but the most part will not come unto him. Some few, whose hearts are touched by his Spirit, embrace the call, and their souls within them say, "Behold, we come unto thee:" they give themselves to the Lord, forsake the world and their lusts for him: they bear his yoke, and cast it not off, no, not in the heat of the day when the weight of it, perhaps, makes them sweat the blood out of their bodies. Behold the fools! says the carnal world, whither are they going? But stay a little, O foolish world! From the same mouth, whence they had the call they are now following, another call shall come, that will make amends for all: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom."

The saints shall find an inexpressible sweetness in this call, Come. 1. Hereby Jesus Christ shews his desire of their society in the upper house, that they may be ever with him there. Thus he will open his heart unto them, as sometimes he did to his Father concerning them, saying, "Father, I will they be with me, where I am," John xvii. 24. Now, the travail of his soul stands before the throne not only the souls, but the bodies, he has redeemed; and they must come, for he must be completely satisfied. 2. Hereby they are solemnly invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. They were invited to the lower table by the voice of the servants, and the sacred

workings of the Spirit within them; and they came, and did partake of the feast of divine communications in the lower house: but Jesus Christ in person shall invite them, before all the world, to the highest table. 3. By this he admits them into the mansions of glory. The keys of heaven hang at the girdle of our royal Mediator. "All power in heaven" is given to him, Matt. xxvii. 18: and none get in thither but whom he admits. When they were living on earth with the rest of the world, he opened the doors of their hearts, entered into them, and shut them again; so as sin could never re-enter, to reign there as formerly: now he opens heaven's doors to them, draws his doves into the ark, and shuts them in; so as the law, death, and hell, can never get them out again. The saints in this life were still labouring to enter into that rest; but Satan was always pulling them back, their corruptions always drawing them down; insomuch that they have sometimes been left to hang by a hair of promise, if I may be allowed the expression, not without fear of falling into the lake of fire: but now Christ gives the word for their admission, they are brought in, and put beyond all hazard. 4. He speaks to them as the person introducing them into the kingdom, into the presence-chamber of the great King, and unto the throne. Jesus Christ is the great Secretary of heaven, whose office it is to bring the saints into the gracious presence of God now, and to whom alone it belongs to bring them into the glorious presence of God in heaven. Truly heaven would be a strange place to them, if Jesus were not there; but the Son will introduce his brethren into his Father's kingdom; they shall go in "with him to the marriage. Matt. xxv. 10.

2. Let us consider in what *quality* they are introduced by him.

(1.) He brings them in as the blessed of his Father; so runs the call from the throne, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," &c. It is Christ's Father's house they are to come into: therefere he puts them in mind that they are blessed of the Father; dear to the Father, as well as to himself. This it is that makes heaven home to them, namely, that it is Christ's Father's house, where they may be assured of welcome, being married to the Son, and being his Father's choice for that very end. He brings them in for his Father's sake, as well as for his own: they are the blessed of his Father; who, as he is the fountain of the Deity, is also the fountain of all blessings conferred on the children of men. They are those whom God loved from eternity. They were blessed in the eternal purpose of God, being elected to everlasting life. At the opening of the book of life, their names were found written therein: so that by bringing them to the kingdom, he doth but bring them to what the Father, from all

eternity, designed for them: being saved by the Son, they are saved according to his, that is, the Father's purpose, 2 Tim. i. 2. They are those to whom the Father has spoken well. He spoke well to them in his word, which must now receive its full accomplishment. They had his promise of the kingdom, lived and died in the faith of it; and now they come to receive the thing promised. Unto them he has done well. A gift is often in Scripture called a blessing; and God's blessing is ever real, like Isaac's blessing, by which Jacob became his heir: they were all by grace justified, sanctified, and enabled to persevere to the end; now they are raised up in glory, and being tried, stand in the judgment: what remains, then, but that God should crown his own work of grace in them, in giving them their kingdom, in the full enjoyment of himself for ever? Finally they are those whom God has consecrated; the which also is a Scripture term of blessing, 1 Cor. x. 16. God set them apart for himself, to be kings and priests unto him; and the Mediator introduces them, as such, to their kingdom and priesthood.

(2.) Christ introduces them, as heirs of the kingdom, to the actual possession of it. "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom." They are the children of God by regeneration and adoption; "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17. Now is the general assembly of the first-born before the throne: their minority is overpast; and the time appointed of the Father for their receiving their inheritance, is come. The Mediator purchased the inheritance for them with his own blood; their rights and evidences were drawn long ago, and registered in the Bible; nay, they have investment of their inheritance in the person of Christ, as their proxy, when he ascended into heaven, "Whither the forerunner is for us entered," Heb. vi. 20. Nothing remains, but that they enter into personal possession thereof, which begun at death, is perfected at the last day; when the saints in their bodies, as well as their souls, go into their kingdom.

(3.) They are introduced to it as those it was prepared for, from the foundation of the world. The kingdom was prepared for them in the eternal purpose of God, before they, or any of them, had a being; which shews it to be a gift of free grace to them. It was from eternity the divine purpose that there should be such a kingdom for the elect; and that all impediments which might oppose their access to it, should be removed out of the way: and also, by the same eternal decree, every one's place in it was determined and set apart, to be reserved for him, that each of the children coming home at length into their Father's house, might find his own place awaiting him, and ready for him; as at Saul's table, David's place

was empty, when he was not there to occupy it himself, 1 Sam. xx. 25. And now the appointed time is come, they are brought in, to take their several places in glory.

Use. I shall conclude my discourse on this subject with a word of application. 1. To all who claim a right to this kingdom. 2. To those who have indeed a right to it. 3. To those who have no right thereto.

1. Since it is evident there is no promiscuous admission into the kingdom of heaven, and none do obtain it but those whose claim to it is solemnly tried by the great Judge, and, after trial, supported as good and valid; it is necessary that all of us partially try and examine, whether, according to the laws of the kingdom, contained in the Holy Scriptures, we can verify and make good our claim to this kingdom. The hopes of heaven, which most men have, are built on such sandy foundations, as can never abide the trial; having no ground whatever but in their own deluded fancy: such hopes will leave those who entertain them miserably disappointed at last. Wherefore, it is not only our duty, but our interest, to put the matter to a fair trial in time. If we find we have no right to heaven, we are yet in the way; and what we have not, we may obtain: but if we find we have a right to it, we shall then have the comfort of a happy prospect into eternity; which is the greatest comfort one is capable of in the world. If you inquire, how you may know whether you have a right to heaven or not, I answer, You may know that by the state you are now in. If you are yet in your natural state, you are children of wrath, and not children of this kingdom; for that state, to those who live and die in it, issues in eternal misery. If you be brought into the state of grace, you have a just claim to the state of glory; for grace will certainly issue in glory at length. This kingdom is an inheritance, which none but the children of God can justly claim. Now, we become the children of God by regeneration, and union with Christ his Son; "And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17. These, then, are the great points upon which our evidences for the state of glory depend. Therefore, I refer you to what is said on the state of grace, for satisfying you as to your right to glory.

If you be heirs of glory, "the kingdom of God is within you," by virtue of your regeneration and union with Christ. 1. The kingdom of heaven has the throne in thy heart, if thou hast a right to that kingdom: Christ is in thee, and God is in thee; and having chosen him for thy portion, thy soul has taken up its everlasting rest in him, and gets no true rest but in him; as the dove, until she came

into the ark. To him the soul habitually inclines, by virtue of the new nature, the divine nature, which the heirs of glory are partakers of, Psalm lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee." 2. The laws of heaven are in thy heart, if thou art an heir of heaven, Heb. viii. 10, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Thy mind is enlightened in the knowledge of the laws of the kingdom, by the Spirit of the Lord, the instructor of all the heirs of glory; for whoever may want instruction, surely an heir to a crown shall not want it. "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God," John vi. 45. Therefore, though father and mother leave them early, or be in no concern about their Christian education, and they be soon put to work for their daily bread, yet they shall not lack teaching. Withal, thy heart is changed, and thou bearest God's image, which consists in "righteousness and true holiness," Eph. iv. 24. Thy soul is reconciled to the whole law of God, and at war with all known sin. In vain do they pretend to the holy kingdom, who are not holy in heart and life; for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. If heaven is a rest, it is for spiritual labourers, not for loiterers. If it is an eternal triumph, they are not in the way to it who avoid the spiritual warfare, and are in no care to subdue corruption, resist temptation, and to cut their way to it through the opposition made by the devil, the world, and the flesh. 3. The treasure in heaven is the chief in thy esteem and desire; for it is your treasure, and "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," Matt. vi. 21. If it is not the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen, which thy heart is in the greatest care and concern to obtain; if thou art driving a trade with heaven, and thy chief business lies there; it is a sign that thy treasure is there, for thy heart is there. But if thou art of those who wonder why so much ado is made about heaven and eternal life, as if less might serve the turn, thou art like to have nothing to do with it at all. Carnal men value themselves most on their treasures upon earth; with them, the things that are not seen are weighed down by the things that are seen, and no losses so much affect them as earthly losses: but the heirs of the crown of glory value themselves most on their treasures in heaven, and will not put their private estate in the balance with their kingdom; nor will the loss of the former go so near their hearts, as the thoughts of the loss of the latter. Where these first-fruits of heaven are to be found, the eternal weight of glory will surely follow after; while the want of them must be admitted according to the word, to be an incontestible evidence of an heir of wrath.

2. Let the heirs of the kingdom behave themselves suitably to their character and dignity. Live as having the faith and hope of this glorious kingdom: let your conversation be in heaven, Phil. iii. 20. Let your souls delight in communion with God while you are on earth, since you look for your happiness in communion with him in heaven. Let your speech and actions savour of heaven; and in your manner of life, look like the country to which you are going: that it may be said of you, as of Gideon's brethren, Judges viii. 18, "Each one resembled the children of a king." Maintain a holy contempt of the world, and of the things of the world. Although others, whose earthly things are their best things, set their hearts upon them, yet it becomes you to set your feet on them, since your best things are above. This world is but the country through which lies your road to Immanuel's land. Therefore pass through it as pilgrims and strangers; and dip not in the encumbrances of it, so as to retard you in your journey. It is unworthy of one born to a palace, to set his heart on a cottage, to dwell there; and of one running for a prize of gold, to go off his way to gather the stones of the brook: but much more is it unworthy of an heir of the kingdom of heaven, to be hid among the stuff of this world, when he should be going on to receive his crown. The prize set before you challenges your utmost zeal, activity, and diligence; and holy courage, resolution, and magnanimity, become those who are to inherit the crown. You cannot come at it without fighting your way to it, through difficulties from without and from within: but the kingdom before you is sufficient to balance them all, though you should be called to resist even unto blood. Prefer Christ's cross before the world's crown, and want in the way of duty, before ease and wealth in the way of sin: "Choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season," Heb. xi. 25. In a common inn, strangers perhaps fare better than the children; but here lies the difference, the children are to pay nothing for what they have got; but the strangers get their bill, and must pay completely for all they have had. Did we consider the after-reckoning of the wicked for all the smiles of common providence they meet with in the world, we should not grudge them their good things here, nor take it amiss that God keeps our best things last. Heaven will make up all the saints' losses, and there all tears will be wiped away from their eyes.

It is worth observing, that there is such a variety of Scripture notions of heaven's happiness, as may suit every afflicted case of the saints. Are they oppressed? The day cometh in which they shall have the dominion. Is their honour laid in the dust? A throne to

sit upon, a crown on their head, and a sceptre in their hand, will raise it up again. Are they reduced to poverty? Heaven is a treasure. If they be forced to quit their own habitations, yet Christ's Father's house is ready for them. Are they driven to the wilderness? There is a city prepared for them. Are they banished from their native country? They shall inherit a better country. If they are deprived of public ordinances, the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple there, whither they are going; a temple, the doors of which none can shut. If their life be full of bitterness, heaven is a paradise for pleasure. If they groan under the remains of spiritual bondage, there is a glorious liberty abiding them. Do their defiled garments make them ashamed? The day cometh, in which their robes shall be white, pure, and spotless. The battle against flesh and blood, principalities and powers, is indeed sore: but a glorious triumph awaits them. If the toil and labours of the Christian life be great, there is an everlasting rest for them in heaven. Are they judged unworthy of the society of angels in heaven? Do they complain of frequent interruptions of their communion with God? There they shall go no more out, but shall see his face for evermore. If they are in darkness here, eternal light is there. If they grapple with death, there they shall have everlasting life. And, to sum up all in one word, "He that overcometh, shall inherit all things," Rev. xxi. 7. He shall have peace and plenty, profit and pleasure, every thing desirable; full satisfaction to his most enlarged desires. Let the expectants of heaven, then, lift up their heads with joy; let them gird up their loins, and so run that they may obtain; trampling on every thing that may hinder them in their way to the kingdom. Let them never account any duty too hard, nor any cross too heavy, nor any pains too great, so that they may attain the crown of glory.

3. Let those who have no right to the kingdom of heaven, be stirred up to seek it with all diligence. Now is the time, wherein the children of wrath may become heirs of glory: when the way to everlasting happiness is opened, it is no time to sit still and loiter. Raise up your hearts towards the glory that is to be revealed; and be not always in search of rest in this perishing earth. What can all your worldly enjoyments avail you, while you have no solid ground to expect heaven after this life is gone? The riches and honours, profits and pleasures, that must be buried with us, and cannot accompany us into another world, are but a wretched portion, and will leave men comfortless at length. Ah! why are men so eager in their lifetime to receive their good things? Why are they not rather careful to secure an interest in the kingdom of

heaven, which would never be taken from them, but afford them a portion to make them happy through the ages of eternity? If you desire honour, there you may have the highest honour, which will last when the world's honours are laid in the dust; if riches, heaven will yield you a treasure; and there are pleasures for evermore. O! be not despisers of the pleasant land, neither judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life; close with Christ, as he is offered to you in the gospel, and you shall inherit all things. Walk in the way of holiness, and it will lead you to the kingdom. Fight against sin and Satan, and you shall receive the crown. Forsake the world, and the doors of heaven will be opened to receive you.

PART VI.

OF HELL.

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—MATT. XXV. 41.

WERE there no other place of eternal lodging but heaven, I should here have closed my discourse of man's eternal state; but as in the other world there is a prison for the wicked, as well as a palace for the saints, we must also inquire into that state of everlasting misery; which the worst of men may well bear with, without crying, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" since there is yet access to flee from the wrath to come; and all that can be said of it comes short of what the damned will feel; for "who knoweth the power of God's anger?"

The last thing which our Lord did, before he left the earth, was, "He lifted up his hands, and blessed his disciples," Luke xxiv. 50, 51. But the last thing he will do, before he leaves the throne, is to curse and condemn his enemies; as we learn from the text, which contains the dreadful sentence, wherein the everlasting misery of the wicked is declared. In which three things may be taken notice of: 1. The quality of the condemned: "ye cursed." The Judge finds the curse of the law upon them as transgressors, and sends them away with it, from his presence, into hell, there to be fully executed upon them. 2. The punishment which they are adjudged

to; and to which they were always bound over by virtue of the curse. And it is twofold, the punishment of loss, in separation from God and Christ, "Depart from me;" and the punishment of sense, in most exquisite and extreme torments, "Depart from me into fire." 3. The aggravations of their torments. 1. They are ready for them, they are not to expect a moment's respite. The fire is prepared and ready to catch hold of those who are thrown into it. 2. They will have the society of devils in their torments being shut up with them in hell. They must depart into the same fire, prepared for Beelzebub the prince of devils, and his angels; namely, other reprobate angels who fell with him, and became devils. It is said to be prepared for them; because they sinned, and were condemned to hell, before man sinned. This speaks further terror to the damned, that they must go into the same torments, and place of torment, with the devil and his angels. They hearkened to his temptations, and they must partake in his torments: his works they would do, and they must receive the wages, which is death. In this life they joined with devils, in enmity against God and Christ, and the way of holiness; and in the other, they must lodge with them. Thus all the goats shall be shut up together; for that name is common to devils and wicked men, in Scripture, Lev. xvii. 7, where the word rendered devils, properly signifies hairy ones, or goats, in the shape of which creatures, devils delighted much to appear to their worshippers. 3. The last aggravation of their torment is the eternal duration thereof; they must depart into everlasting fire. This is what puts the top-stone upon their misery, namely, that it shall never have an end.

Doctrine, The wicked shall be shut up under the curse of God, in everlasting misery, with the devils in hell.

After having proved, that there shall be a resurrection of the body, and a general judgment, I think it not needful to insist on proving the truth of future punishment. The same conscience there is in men of a future judgment, bears witness also of the truth of future punishment. (And that the punishment of the damned shall not be annihilation, or a reducing them to nothing, will be clear in the progress of our discourse.) In treating of this awful subject I shall inquire into these four things: 1. The curse under which the damned shall be shut up. II. Their misery under that curse. III. Their society with devils in this miserable state. IV. The eternity of the whole.

I. As to the curse under which the damned shall be shut up in hell; it is the terrible sentence of the law, by which they are bound over to the wrath of God, as transgressors. This curse does not first seize them when standing before the tribunal to receive their

sentence; but they were born under it, they led their lives under it in this world, they died under it, rose with it out of their graves; and the Judge finding it upon them, sends them away with it into the pit, where it shall lie on them through all the ages of eternity. By nature all men are under the curse; but it is removed from the elect, by virtue of their union with Christ. It abides on the rest of sinful mankind, and by it they are devoted to destruction, separated to evil, as one describes the curse, from Deut. xxix. 21, "And the Lord shall separate him unto evil." Thus shall the damned for ever be persons devoted to destruction; separate and set apart from the rest of mankind, unto evil, as vessels of wrath; set up as marks for the arrows of divine wrath; and made the common receptacle and shore of vengeance.

This curse hath its first-fruits on earth, which are a pledge of the whole lump that is to follow. Hence it is, that as temporal and eternal benefits are bound up together, under the same expressions, in the promise to the Lord's people, as Isa. xxxv. 10, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion," &c. relating both to return from Babylon, and to the saints' going to their eternal rest in heaven; even so, temporal and eternal miseries, on the enemies of God, are sometimes included under one and the same expression in the threatening, as Isa. xxx. 33, "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large: the pile hereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." Which relates both to the temporal and eternal destruction of the Assyrians, who fell by the hand of the angel before Jerusalem. See also Isa. lxvi. 24. What is that judicial blindness to which many are given up, "whom the god of this world hath blinded," 2 Cor. iv. 4, but the first fruits of hell and of the curse? their sun is going down at noon-day; their darkness increasing, as if it would not stop till it issue in utter darkness. Many a lash in the dark doth conscience give the wicked, which the world doth not hear of: and what is that but the never-dying worm already begun to gnaw them? And there is not one of these but they may call it Joseph, for "the Lord shall add another;" or rather Gad, for "a troop cometh." These drops of wrath are terrible forebodings of the full shower which is to follow. Sometimes they are given up to their vile affections, that they have no more command over them, Rom. i. 26. So their lusts grow up more and more towards perfection, if I may so speak.

As in heaven grace comes to its perfection, so in hell sin arrives at its highest pitch; and as sin is thus advancing upon the man, he

is the nearer and liker to hell.—There are three things that have a fearful aspect here. 1. When every thing that might do good to men's souls, is blasted to them; so that their blessings are cursed, Mal. ii. 2; sermons, prayers, admonitions, and reproofs, which are powerful towards others, are quite inefficacious to them. 2. When men go on in sinning still, in the face of plain rebukes from the Lord, in ordinances and providences. God meets them with rods in the way of their sin, as it were striking them back; yet they rush forward. What can be more like hell, where the Lord is always smiting and the damned always sinning against him? 3. When every thing in one's lot is turned into fuel to one's lusts. Thus, adversity and prosperity, poverty and wealth, the want of ordinances and the enjoyment of them, do all but nourish the corruptions of many. Their vicious stomachs corrupt whatever they receive, and all does but increase noxious humours.

But the full harvest follows, in that misery which they shall for ever lie under in hell; that wrath which, by virtue of the curse, shall come upon them to the uttermost; which is the curse fully executed. This black cloud opens upon them, and the terrible thunderbolt strikes them, by that dreadful voice from the throne, "Depart from me, ye cursed," &c. Which will give the whole wicked world a dismal view of what is in the bosom of the curse. It is, 1. A voice of extreme indignation and wrath, a furious rebuke from the Lion of the tribe of Judah. His looks will be most terrible to them; his eyes will cast flames of fire on them; and his words will pierce their hearts, like envenomed arrows. When he will thus speak them out of his presence for ever, and by his word chase them away from before the throne, they will see how keenly wrath burns in his heart against them for their sins. 2. It is a voice of extreme disdain and contempt from the Lord. Time was when they were pitied, admonished to pity themselves, and to be the Lord's; yet they despised him, they would none of him: but now they shall be buried out of his sight, under everlasting contempt. 3. It is a voice of extreme hatred. Hereby the Lord shuts them out of his bowels of love and mercy. "Depart, ye cursed." I cannot endure to look at you; there is not one purpose of good to you in mine heart; nor shall you ever hear one word more of hope from me. 4. It is a voice of eternal rejection from the Lord. He commands them to be gone, and so casts them off for ever. Thus the doors of heaven are shut against them; the gulf is fixed between them and it, and they are driven to the pit.—Now, were they to cry with all possible earnestness, "Lord, Lord, open to us;" they will hear nothing but, "Depart, depart ye cursed." Thus shall the damned be shut up under the curse.

Use 1. Let all those who, being yet in their natural state, are under the curse, consider this, and flee to Jesus Christ in time, that they may be delivered from it. How can you sleep in that state, being under the curse! Jesus Christ is now saying unto you, "Come ye cursed, I will take the curse from off you, and give you the blessing." The waters of the sanctuary are now running, to heal the cursed ground; take heed to improve them for that end to your own souls, and fear it as hell, to get no spiritual advantage thereby. Remember that "the miry places," which are neither sea nor dry land, a fit emblem of hypocrites, "and the marshes," that neither breed fishes, nor bear trees, but the waters of the sanctuary leave them, as they find them, in their barrenness, "shall not be healed;" seeing they spurn the only remedy; "they shall be given to salt," left under eternal barrenness, set up for the monuments of the wrath of God, and concluded for ever under the curse, Ezek. xlvii. 11. 2. Let all cursers consider this, whose mouths are filled with cursing themselves and others. He who "clothes himself with cursing," shall find the curse "come into his bowels like water, and oil into his bones," Psalm cix. 18, if repentance prevent it not. He shall get all his imprecations against himself fully answered, in the day wherein he stands before the tribunal of God: and shall find the killing weight of the curse of God, which he now makes light of.

II. I proceed to speak of the misery of the damned, under that curse; a misery which the tongues of men and angels cannot sufficiently express. God always acts like himself: no favours can be compared to his, and his wrath and terrors are without a parallel. As the saints in heaven are advanced to the highest pitch of happiness, so the damned in hell arrive at the height of misery. Two things here I shall soberly inquire into,—the punishment of loss, and the punishment of sense, in hell. But since these also are such things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, we must, as geographers do, leave a large void for the unknown land, which the day will discover.

1. The punishment of loss which the damned shall undergo, is separation from the Lord, as we learn from the text, "Depart from me, ye cursed." This will be a stone upon their grave's mouth, as "the talent of lead," Zech. v. 7, 8, that will hold them down for ever. They shall be eternally separated from God and Christ. Christ is the way to the Father: but the way, as to them, shall be everlastingly blocked up, the bridge shall be drawn, and the great gulf fixed; so shall they be shut up in a state of eternal separation from God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They will be locally separated from the man Christ, and shall never come into the seat of the

blessed, where he appears in his glory, but be cast out into utter darkness, Matt. xxii. 13. They cannot indeed be locally separated from God, they cannot be in a place where he is not; since he is, and will be present every where: "If I make my bed in hell," says the psalmist, "behold thou art there," Psalm cxxxix. 8. But they shall be miserable beyond expression, in a relative separation from God. Though he will be present in the very centre of their souls, if I may so express it, while they are wrapped up in fiery flames, in utter darkness; it shall only be to feed them with the vinegar of his wrath, and to punish them with the emanations of his revenging justice: they shall never more taste of his goodness and bounty, nor have the least glimpse of hope from him. They will see his heart to be absolutely alienated from them, and that it cannot be towards them; that they are the party against whom the Lord will have indignation for ever. They shall be deprived of the glorious presence and enjoyment of God: they shall have no part in the beatific vision; nor see any thing in God towards them, but one wave of wrath rolling after another. This will bring upon them overwhelming floods of sorrow for evermore. They shall never taste of the rivers of pleasures which the saints in heaven enjoy; but shall have an everlasting winter, and a perpetual night, because the Sun of righteousness has departed from them, and so they are left in utter darkness. So great as heaven's happiness is, so great will their loss be: for they can have none of it for ever.

This separation of the wicked from God will be, 1. An involuntary separation. Now they depart from him, they will not come to him, though they are called and entreated to come: but then they shall be driven away from him, when they would gladly abide with him. Although the question "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" is frequent now amongst the despisers of the gospel, there will be no such question among all the damned; for then they will see that man's happiness is only to be found in the enjoyment of God, and that the loss of him is a loss that can never be balanced. 2. It will be a total and utter separation. Though the wicked are, in this life, separated from God, yet there is a kind of intercourse betwixt them: he gives them many good gifts, and they give him, at least, some good words; so that the peace is not altogether hopeless. But then there shall be a total separation, the damned being cast into utter darkness, where there will not be the least gleam of light and favour from the Lord; which will put an end unto all their fair words to him. 3. It shall be a final separation; they will part with him, never more to meet, being shut up under everlasting horror and despair. The match between Jesus

Christ and unbelievers, which has so often been carried forward, and put back again, shall then be broken up for ever; and never shall one message of favour or good-will go betwixt the parties any more.

This punishment of loss, in a total and final separation from God, is a misery beyond what mortals can conceive, and which the dreadful experience of the damned can only sufficiently unfold. But that we may have some conception of the horror of it, let these following things be considered.

(1.) God is the chief good; therefore, to be separated from him, must be the chief evil. Our native country, our relations, and our life, are good; and therefore to be deprived of them we reckon a great evil; and the better any thing is, so much the greater evil is the loss of it. Wherefore, God being the chief good, and no good comparable to him, there can be no loss so great as the loss of God. The full enjoyment of him is the highest pinnacle of happiness the creature is capable of arriving at: to be fully and finally separated from him, must then be the lowest step of misery which the rational creature can be reduced to. To be cast off by men, by good men, is distressing; what must it then be, to be rejected of God, of goodness itself?

(2.) God is the fountain of all goodness, from which all goodness flows unto the creatures, and by which it is continued in them, and to them. Whatever goodness or perfection, natural as well as moral, is in any creature, it is from God, and depends upon him, as the light is from, and depends on, the sun; for every created being, as such, is a dependent one. Wherefore, a total separation from God, wherein all comfortable communication between God and a rational creature is absolutely blocked up, must of necessity bring along with it a total eclipse of all light of comfort and ease whatever. If there is but one window, or open place, in a house, and that be quite shut up, it is evident there can be nothing but darkness in that house. Our Lord tells us, Matt. xix. 17, "There is none good but one, that is, God." Nothing good or comfortable is originally from the creature: whatever good or comfortable thing one finds in one's self, as health of body, peace of mind; whatever sweetness, rest, pleasure, or delight, one finds in other creatures, as in meat, drink, arts and sciences; all these are but some faint rays of Divine perfections, communicated from God unto the creature, and depending on a constant influence from him, for their conservation, which failing, they would immediately be gone; for it is impossible that any created thing can be to us more or better, than what God makes it to be. All the rivulets of comfort we drink of, within

or without ourselves, come from God as their spring-head; the course of which toward us being stopped, of necessity they must all dry up. So that when God goes, all that is good and comfortable goes with him, all ease and quiet of body and mind, Hos. ix. 12, "Wo also to them, when I depart from them." When the wicked are totally and finally separated from him, all that is comfortable in them, or about them, returns to its fountain; as the light goes away with the sun, and darkness succeeds in the room thereof. Thus, in their separation from God, all peace is removed far away from them, and pain in body and anguish of soul, succeed to it: all joy goes, and unmixed sorrow settles in them: all quiet and rest separate from them, and they are filled with horror and rage: hope flies away, and despair seizes them; common operations of the Spirit, which now restrain them, are withdrawn for ever, and sin comes to its utmost height. Thus we have a dismal view of the horrible spectacle of sin and misery, which a creature proves, when totally separated from God, and left to itself; and we may see this separation to be the very hell of hell.

Being seprated from God, they are deprived of all good. The good things which they set their hearts upon in this world, are beyond their reach there. The covetous man cannot enjoy his wealth there, nor the ambitious man his honours, nor the sensual man his pleasures, no, not a drop of water to cool his tongue, Luke xvi. 24, 25. No meat or drink there to strengthen the faint; no sleep to refresh the weary: and no music, or pleasant company, to comfort and cheer up the sorrowful. And as for those good things they despised in the world, they shall never more hear of them, nor see them. No offer of Christ there, no pardon, no peace; no wells of salvation in the pit of destruction. In one word, they shall be deprived of whatever might comfort them, being totally and finally separated from God, the fountain of all goodness and comfort.

(3.) Man naturally desires to be happy, being conscious to himself that he is not self-sufficient: he has ever a desire of something without himself, to make him happy; and the soul being, by its natural make and constitution, capable of enjoying God, and nothing else being commensurable to its desires, it can never have true and solid rest, till it rests in the enjoyment of God. This desire of happiness the rational creature can never lay aside, no, not in hell. Now, while the wicked are on earth, they seek their satisfaction in the creature: and when one fails, they go to another: thus they spend their time in the world, deceiving their own souls with vain hopes. But, in the other world, all comfort in the creatures failing, and the shadows which they are now pursuing vanished in a moment, they

shall be totally and finally separated from God, and see they have thus lost him. So the doors of earth and heaven both are shut against them at once. This will create them unspeakable anguish, while they shall live under an eternal gnawing hunger after happiness, which they certainly know shall never be in the least measure satisfied, all doors being closed on them. Who then can imagine how this separation from God shall cut the damned to the heart? how they will roar and rage under it? and how it will sting and gnaw them through the ages of eternity?

(4.) The damned shall know that some are perfectly happy, in the enjoyment of that God from whom they themselves are separated; and this will aggravate the sense of their loss, that they can never have any share with those happy ones. Being separated from God, they are separated from the society of the glorified saints and angels. They may see Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom, Luke xvi. 23, but can never come into their company; being, as unclean lepers, thrust out without the camp, and excommunicated from the presence of the Lord, and of all his holy ones. It is the opinion of some, that every person in heaven or hell shall hear and see all that passes in either state. Whatever is to be said of this, we have ground from the word to conclude, that the damned shall have a very exquisite knowledge of the happiness of the saints in heaven; for what else can be meant of the rich man in hell seeing Lazarus in Abraham's bosom? One thing is plain, in this case, that their own torments will give them such notions of the happiness of the saints, as a sick man has of health, or a prisoner has of liberty. And as they cannot fail of reflecting on the happiness of those in heaven, without any hope of attaining to contentment with their own lot, so every thought of that happiness will aggravate their loss. It would be a mighty torment to a hungry man to see others liberally feasting, while he is so chained up, as not to have one crumb to stay his gnawing appetite. To bring music and dancing before a man labouring under extreme pains, would but increase his anguish: how then will the songs of the blessed, in their enjoyment of God, make the damned mourn under their separation from him!

(5.) They will remember that time was when they might have been made partakers of the blessed company of saints, in their enjoyment of God: and this will aggravate their sense of the loss. All may remember, that there was once a possibility of it; that they were once in the world, in some corners of which the way of salvation was laid open to men's view; and may wish they had gone round the world, till they had found it out. Despisers of the gospel will remember, with bitterness, that Jesus Christ, with all his bene-

fits, was offered to them: that they were exhorted, entreated, and pressed to accept, but would not; and that they were warned of the misery they feel, and exhorted to flee from the wrath to come, but they would not hearken. The gospel offer slighted will make a hot hell, and the loss of an offered heaven will be a sinking weight on the spirits of unbelievers in the pit. Some will remember that there was a probability of their being eternally happy; that once they seemed to stand fair for it, and were not far from the kingdom of God; that they had once almost consented to the blessed bargain; the pen was in their hand, as it were, to sign the marriage contract between Christ and their souls; but unhappily they dropped it, and turned back from the Lord to their lusts again. Others will remember, that they thought themselves sure of heaven, but, being blinded with pride and self-conceit, they were above ordinances, and beyond instruction, and would not examine their state, which was their ruin: but then they will in vain wish that they had reputed themselves the worst of the congregation, and curse the fond conceit they had of themselves, and that others had of them too. Thus it will sting the damned, that they might have escaped this loss.

(6.) They will see the loss to be irrecoverable; that they must eternally lie under it, never, never to be repaired. Might the damned, after millions of ages in hell, regain what they have lost, it would be some ground of hope; but the prize is gone, and never can be recovered. There are two things which will pierce them to the heart: 1. That they never knew the worth of it, till it was irrecoverably lost. Should a man give away an earthen pot full of gold for a trifle, not knowing what was in it till it were quite gone from him, and past recovery, how would this foolish action gall him, upon the discovery of the riches in it! Such a one's case may be a faint resemblance of the case of despisers of the gospel, when in hell they lift up their eyes, and behold that to their torment, which they will not see now to their salvation. 2. That they have lost it for dross and dung; sold their part of heaven, and not enriched themselves with the price. They have lost heaven for earthly profits and pleasures, and now both are gone together from them. The drunkard's cups are gone, the covetous man's gain, the voluptuous man's carnal delights, and the sluggard's ease: nothing is left to comfort them now. The happiness they lost remains indeed, but they can have no part in it for ever.

USE. Sinners, be persuaded to come to God through Jesus Christ, uniting with him through the Mediator; that you may be preserved from this fearful separation from him. O be afraid to live in a state of separation from God, lest that which you now make your choice,

become your eternal punishment hereafter. Do not reject communion with God, cast not off the communion of saints; for it will be the misery of the damned to be driven out from that communion. Cease to build up the wall of separation between God and you, by continuing in your sinful courses; repent rather in time, and so pull it down; lest the topstone be laid upon it, and it stand for ever between you and happiness. Tremble at the thought of rejection and separation from God. By whomsoever men are rejected upon earth, they ordinarily find some pity; but, if you be thus separated from God, you will find all doors shut against you. You will find no pity from any in heaven; neither saints nor angels will pity them whom God has utterly cast off; none will pity you in hell, where there is no love, but loathing; all being loathed of God, loathing him, and loathing one another. This is a day of losses and fears. I shew you a loss you would do well to fear in time; be afraid lest you lose God; if you do, eternity will be spent in roaring out lamentations for this loss. O horrid stupidity! Men are in a mighty care and concern to prevent worldly losses; but they are in danger of losing the enjoyment of God for ever and ever; in danger of losing heaven, the communion of the blessed, and all good things for soul and body in another world; yet as careless in that matter as if they were incapable of thought. O compare this day with the day our text aims at. To-day heaven is opened for those who hitherto have rejected Christ; and yet there is room, if they will come: but that day the doors shall be shut. Now Christ is saying unto you, "Come:" then he will say: "Depart;" seeing you would not come when you were invited. Now pity is shewn; the Lord pities you, his servants pity you, and tell you that the pit is before you, and cry to you, that you do yourselves no harm: but then shall you have no pity from God or man.

2. The damned shall be punished in hell with the punishment of sense; they must depart from God into everlasting fire. I am not disposed to dispute what kind of fire it is into which they shall depart, to be tormented for ever, whether a material fire or not: experience will more than satisfy the curiosity of those who are disposed rather to dispute about it, than to seek how to escape it. Neither will I meddle with the question, Where is it? It is enough that the worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched, will be found somewhere by impenitent sinners. But, first, I shall prove that, whatever kind of fire it is, it is more vehement and terrible than any fire we on earth are acquainted with. Secondly, I shall state some of the properties of these fiery torments.

As to the first of these; burning is the most terrible punishment, and brings the most exqusite pain and torment with it. By what

reward could a man be induced to hold only his hand in the flame of a candle but for one hour? All imaginable pleasures on earth will never prevail with the most voluptuous man, to venture to lodge but one half hour in a burning fiery furnace; nor would all the wealth in the world prevail with the most covetous to do it: yet, on much lower terms do most men, in effect, expose themselves to everlasting fire in hell, which is more vehement and terrible than any fire we on earth are acquainted with; as will appear by the following considerations.

(1.) As in heaven, grace being brought to its perfection, profit and pleasure also arrive at their height there; so sin, being come to its height in hell, the evil of punishment also arrives at its perfection there. Wherefore, as the joys of heaven are far greater than any joys which the saints obtain on earth, so the punishments of hell must be greater than any earthly torments whatever; not only in respect of the continuance of them, but also in respect of vehemency and exquisiteness.

(2.) Why are the things of another world represented to us in an earthly dress, in the word, but because the weakness of our capacities in such matters, which the Lord is pleased to condescend unto, requires it; it being always supposed, that the things of the other world are in their kind more perfect than those by which they are represented: when heaven is represented to us under the notion of a city, with gates of pearl, and the street of gold, we expect not to find gold and pearls there, which are so mightily prized on earth, but something more excellent than the finest and most precious things in the world: when, therefore, we hear of hell-fire, it is necessary we understand by it something more vehement, piercing, and tormenting, than any fire ever seen by our eyes. And here it is worth considering, that the torments of hell are held forth under several other notions than that of fire simply: and the reason of it is plain; namely, that hereby what of horror is wanting in one notion of hell, is supplied by another. Why is heaven's happiness represented under the various notions of "a treasure, a paradise, a feast, a rest," &c. but that there is not one of these things sufficient to express it? Even so, hell-torments are represented under the notion of fire, which the damned are cast into. A dreadful representation indeed! yet not sufficient to express the misery of the state of sinners in them. Wherefore, we hear also of "the second death," Rev. xx. 6; for the damned in hell shall be ever dying: of the "wine-press of the wrath of God," chap. xiv. 19, wherein they will be trodden in anger, trampled in the Lord's fury, Isaiah lxiii. 3; pressed, broken, and bruised, without end: "the worm that dieth

not," Mark ix. 44, which shall eternally gnaw them: "a bottomless pit," where they will be ever sinking, Rev. xx. 3. It is not simply called "a fire," but "the lake of fire and brimstone," ver. 10, "a lake of fire burning with brimstone," chap. xix. 20; than which one can imagine nothing more dreadful. Yet, because fire gives light, and light, as Solomon observes, Eccles. xi. 7, is sweet, there is no light there, but darkness, utter darkness, Matt. xxv. 30. For they must have an everlasting night, since nothing can be there which is in any measure comfortable or refreshing.

(3.) Our fire cannot affect a spirit, but by way of sympathy with the body to which it is united: but hell-fire will not only pierce into the bodies, but directly into the souls of the damned: for it is "prepared for the devil and his angels," those wicked spirits, whom no fire on earth can hurt. Job complains heavily, under the chastisements of God's fatherly hand, saying, "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit," Job vi. 4. But how will the spirits of the damned be pierced with the arrows of revenging justice! how will they be drunk up with the poison of the curse of these arrows! how vehement must that fire be which pierces directly into the soul, and makes an everlasting burning in the spirit, the most lively and tender part of a man, wherein wounds or pains are most intolerable!

(4.) The preparation of this fire proves the inexpressible vehemency and dreadfulness of it. The text calls it, "prepared fire, yea, *the* prepared fire, by way of eminence. As the three children were not cast into ordinary fire, but a fire prepared for a particular purpose which therefore was exceeding hot, the furnace being heated seven times more than ordinary, Dan. iii. 19—22; so the damned shall find in hell a prepared fire, the like to which was never prepared by human art; it is a fire of God's own preparing, the product of infinite wisdom, with a particular purpose, to demonstrate the most strict and severe divine justice against sin; which may sufficiently evidence to us the inconceiveably exquisiteness thereof. God always acts in a peculiar way, becoming his infinite greatness, whether for or against the creature: therefore, as the things he has prepared for them that love him, are great and good beyond expression or conception, so one may conclude, that the things he has prepared against those who hate him, are great and terrible beyond what men can either say or think of them. The pile of Tophet is "fire, and much wood;" the coals of that fire are "coals of juniper," a kind of wood which, set on fire, burns most fiercely, Psalm cxx. 4; "and the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it," Isa. xxx. 33. Fire is more or less violent, according to

the matter of it, and the breath by which it is blown. What heart, then, can fully conceive the horror of coals of juniper, blown up with the breath of the Lord? Nay, God himself will be a consuming fire, Deut. iv. 24, to the damned; intimately present, as a devouring fire, in the souls and bodies. It is a fearful thing to fall into a fire, or to be shut up in a fiery furnace, on earth; but the terror of these vanishes, when we consider, how fearful it is to fall into the hands of the living God, which is the lot of the damned; for "Who shall dwell with devouring fire? Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Isa. xxxiii. 14.

As to the second point proposed, namely, the properties of the fiery torments in hell;

(1.) They will be universal torments, every part of the creature being tormented in that flame. When one is cast into a fiery furnace, the fire makes its way into the very heart, and leaves no member untouched: what part, then, can have ease, when the damned swim in a lake of fire, burning with brimstone? There will their bodies be tormented, and scorched for ever. And as they sinned, so shall they be tormented, in all the parts thereof, that they shall have no sound side to turn them to; for what soundness or ease can be to any part of that body, which being separated from God, and all refreshment from him, is still in the pangs of the second death, ever dying, but never dead? But as the soul was chief in sinning, it will be chief in suffering too, being filled quite full of the wrath of a sin-avenging God. The damned shall be ever under the deepest impressions of God's vindictive justice against them: and this fire will melt their souls within them, like wax. Who knows the power of that wrath which had such an effect on the Mediator standing in the room of sinners, Psalm xxii. 14. "My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels?" Their minds shall be filled with the terrible apprehensions of God's implacable wrath: and whatever they can think upon, past, present, or to come, will aggravate their torment and anguish. Their will shall be crossed in all things for evermore: as their will was ever contrary to the will of God's precepts; so God, in his dealing with them, in the other world, shall have war with their will for ever. What they would have, they shall not in the least obtain: but what they would not, shall be bound upon them without remedy. Hence, no pleasant affection shall ever spring up in their hearts any more: their love of complacency, joy, and delight, in any object whatever, shall be plucked up by the root; and they will be filled with hatred, fury, and rage against God, themselves, and their fellow-

creatures, whether happy in heaven, or miserable in hell, as they themselves are. They will be sunk in sorrow, racked with anxiety, filled with horror, galled to the heart with fretting, and continually darted with despair: which will make them weep, gnash their teeth, and blaspheme for ever. "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," Matt. xxii. 13. "And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great," Rev. xvi. 21. Conscience will be a worm to gnaw and prey upon them; remorse for their sins shall seize them and torment them for ever, and they shall not be able to shake it off, as once they did; for "in hell their worm dieth not," Mark ix. 44, 46. Their memory will serve but to aggravate their torment, and every new reflection will bring another pang of anguish, Luke xvi. 25, "But Abraham said," to the rich man in hell, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things."

(2.) The torments in hell are manifold. Put the case that a man were, at one and the same time, under the violence of the gout, gravel, and whatever diseases and pains have ever met together in one body; the torment of such a one would be but light in comparison of the torments of the damned. For, as in hell there is an absence of all that is good and desirable, so there is the confluence of all evils there; since all the effects of sin and of the curse take their place in it, after the last judgment, Rev. xx. 14, "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire." There they will find a prison they can never escape out of; a lake of fire, where they will be ever swimming and burning; a pit, whereof they will never find a bottom. The worm that dieth not, shall feed on them, as on bodies which are interred: the fire that is not quenched, shall devour them, as dead bodies which are burned. Their eyes shall be kept in blackness of darkness, without the least comfortable gleam of light; their ears filled with frightful yellings of the infernal crew. They shall taste nothing but the sharpness of God's wrath, the dregs of the cup of his fury. The stench of the burning lake of brimstone will be the smell there; and they shall feel extreme pains for evermore.

(3.) They will be most exquisite and vehement torments, causing "weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth," Matt. xiii. 42, and xxii. 13. They are represented to us under the notion of pangs in travail, which are very sharp and exquisite. So says the rich man in hell, Luke xvi. 24, "I am tormented," to wit, as one in the pangs of child-bearing, "in this flame." Ah! dreadful pangs! horrible

travail, in which both soul and body are in pangs together! helpless travail, hopeless and endless! The word used for hell, Matt. v. 22, and in divers other places of the New Testament, properly denotes the valley of Hinnom; the name being taken from the valley of the children of Hinnom, in which was Tophet, 2 Kings xxiii. 10, where idolaters offered their children to Moloch. This is said to have been a great brazen idol, with arms like a man's: which being heated by fire within it, the child was set in the burning arms of the idol, and, that the parent might not hear the shrieks of the child burning to death, they beat drums in the time of the horrible sacrifice; whence the place had the name of Tophet. Thus the exquisiteness of the torments in hell are pointed out to us. Some have endured grievous tortures on earth with surprising obstinacy and undaunted courage: but men's courage will fail them there, when they find themselves fallen into the hands of the living God; and no escape to be expected for ever. It is true, there will be degrees of torments in hell; "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, than for Chorazin and Bethsaida," Matt. xi. 21, 22. But the least load of wrath there, will be unsupportable; for how can the heart of the creature endure, or his hands be strong, when God himself is a consuming fire to him? When the tares are bound in bundles for the fire, there will be bundles of covetous persons, of drunkards, profane swearers, unclean persons, formal hypocrites, unbelievers, and despisers of the gospel, and the like: the several bundles being cast into hell-fire, some will burn more vehemently than others, according as their sins have been more heinous than those of others: a fiercer flame shall seize the bundle of the profane, than the bundle of unsanctified moralists; the furnace will be hotter to those who have sinned against light, than to those who lived in darkness; Luke xii. 47, 48, "That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." But the sentence common to them all, Matt. xiii. 30, "Bind them in bundles to burn them," speaks the great vehemency and exquisiteness of the lowest degree of torment in hell.

(4.) They will be uninterrupted; there is no intermission there; no ease, no, not for a moment. They "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever," Rev. xx. 10. Few are so tossed in this world, but sometimes they get rest; but the damned shall get none; they took their rest in the time appointed of God for their labour. Storms are rarely seen, without some space between showers; but there is no intermission in the storm that falls on the wicked in

hell. There, deep will be calling unto deep, and the waves of wrath continually rolling over them. There, the heavens will be always black to them, and they shall have a perpetual night, but no rest, Rev. xiv. 11, "They have no rest day nor night."

(5.) They will be unpitied. The punishments inflicted on the greatest malefactors on earth, draw forth some compassion from the spectators; but the damned shall have none to pity them. God will not pity them, but laugh at their calamity, Prov. i. 26. The blessed company in heaven shall rejoice in the execution of God's righteous judgment, and sing while the smoke riseth up for ever and ever, Rev. xix. 3, "And again they said, Hallelujah; and her smoke rose up for ever and ever." No compassion can be expected from the devil and his angels, who delight in the ruin of the children of men, and are and will be for ever void of pity. Neither will one pity another there, where every one is weeping and gnashing his teeth, under his own insupportable anguish and pain. There, natural affection will be extinguished; parents will not love their children, nor children their parents; the mother will not pity the daughter in these flames, nor will the daughter pity the mother: the son will shew no regard to his father there, nor the servant to his master, where every one will be groaning under his own torment.

(6.) To complete their misery, their torments shall be eternal, Rev. xiv. 11, "And the smoke of their torments ascendeth up for ever and ever." Ah! what a frightful case is this, to be tormented in the whole body and soul, and that not with one kind of torment, but many; all of these most exquisite, and all this without any intermission, and without pity from any! What heart can conceive those things without horror? Nevertheless, if this most miserable case were at length to have an end, that would afford some comfort; but the torments of the damned will have no end; of which more afterwards.

Use. Learn from this, 1. The evil of sin. It is a stream that will carry down the sinner, till he be swallowed up in the ocean of wrath. The pleasures of sin are bought too dear, at the rate of everlasting burnings. What availed the rich man's purple clothing and sumptuous fare, when in hell he was encircled by purple flames, and could not have a drop of water to cool his tongue? Alas! that men should indulge themselves in sin which will be such bitterness in the end! that they should drink so greedily of the poisonous cup, and hug that serpent in their bosom, that will sting them to the heart. 2. What a God he is with whom we have to do? What hatred he bears to sin, and how severely he punishes it! Know the Lord to be most just, as well as most merciful, and think not that he is

such a one as you are; away with the fatal mistake ere it be too late, Psalm. l. 21, 22, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself; but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes. Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." The fire prepared for the devil and his angels, as dark as it is, will discover God to be a severe revenger of sin. 3. The absolute necessity of fleeing to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith; the same necessity of repentance, and holiness of heart and life. The avenger of blood is pursuing thee, O sinner; haste and escape to the city of refuge. Wash now in the fountain of the Mediator's blood, that you may not perish in the lake of fire. Open thy heart to him, lest the pit close its mouth on thee. Leave thy sins, else they will ruin thee; kill them, else they will be thy death for ever.

Let not the terror of hell-fire put thee upon hardening thy heart more, as it may do, if thou entertain that wicked thought, "There is no hope," Jer. ii. 25, which, perhaps, is more common among the hearers of the gospel, than many are aware of. But there is hope for the worst of sinners, who will come unto Jesus Christ. If there are no good qualifications in thee, as certainly there can be none in a natural man, none in any man, but what are received from Christ, know, that he has not suspended thy welcome on any good qualifications: do thou take him and his salvation freely offered unto all to whom the gospel comes. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. "Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out," John vi. 37. It is true, thou art a sinful creature, and canst not repent; thou art unholy, and canst not make thyself holy: nay, thou hast attempted to repent, to forsake sin, and to be holy, but still failed of repentance, reformation, and holiness; and therefore, "Thou saidst, There is no hope. No, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." Truly no wonder that the success has not answered thy expectation, since thou hast always begun thy work amiss. But do thou first of all honour God, by believing the testimony he has given of his Son, namely, that eternal life is in him: and honour the Son of God, by believing in him, that is, embracing and falling in with the free offer of Christ, and of his salvation from sin and from wrath, made to thee in the gospel; trusting in him confidently for righteousness to thy justification, and also for sanctification; seeing "of God he is made unto us" both "righteousness and sanctification," 1 Cor. i. 30. Then, if thou hast as much credit to give to the word of God, as thou wouldst allow to the word of an honest man, offering thee a gift, and saying, Take it, and it is thine; thou mayst believe, that God is thy God,

Christ is thine, his salvation is thine, thy sins are pardoned, thou hast strength in him for repentance and for holiness; for all these are made over to thee in the free offer of the gospel. Believing on the Son of God, thou art justified, the curse is removed. And while it lies upon thee, how is it possible thou shouldst bring forth the fruits of holiness? But, the curse removed, that death which seized on thee with the first Adam, according to the threatening, Gen. ii. 17, is taken away. In consequence of which, thou shalt find the bands of wickedness, now holding thee fast in impenitence, broken asunder, as the bands of that death; so as thou wilt be able to repent indeed, from the heart: thou shalt find the spirit of life returned to thy soul, on whose departure that death ensued, so as thenceforth thou shalt be enabled to live unto righteousness. No man's case is so bad, but it may be mended this way, in time, to be perfectly right in eternity: and no man's case is so good, but, another way being taken, it will be ruined for time and eternity too.

III. The damned shall have the society of devils in their miserable state in hell: for they must depart into "fire prepared for the devil and his angels." O horrible company! O frightful association! who would choose to dwell in a palace, haunted with devils? To be confined to the most pleasant spot of earth, with the devil and his infernal furies, would be a most terrible confinement. How would men's hearts fail them, and their hair stand up, finding themselves environed with the hellish crew! But, ah! how much more terrible must it be, to be cast with the devils into one fire, locked up with them in one dungeon, shut up with them in one pit! To be closed up in a den of roaring lions, girded about with serpents, surrounded with venomous asps, and to have the heart eaten out by vipers, altogether and at once, is a comparison too low, to shew the misery of the damned, shut up in hell with the devil and his angels. They go about now as roaring lions, seeking whom they may devour: but then they shall be confined in their den with their prey. They shall be filled with the wrath of God, and receive the full torment, Matt. viii. 29, which they tremble in expectation of, James ii. 19, being cast into the fire prepared for them. How will these lions roar and tear! how will these serpents hiss! these dragons cast out fire! what horrible anguish will seize the damned, finding themselves in the lake of fire, with the devil, who deceived them; drawn thither with the silken cords of temptation, by these wicked spirits; and bound with them in everlasting chains under darkness! Rev. xx. 10, "And the devil that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

O! that men would consider this in time, renounce the devil and his lusts, and join themselves to the Lord in faith and holiness. Why should men choose such company in this world, and delight in such society, as they would not desire to associate with in the other world? Those who like not the company of the saints on earth, will get none of it in eternity; but, as godless company is their delight now, they will afterwards get enough of it; when they have eternity to pass in the roaring and blaspheming society of devils and reprobates in hell.—Let those who use to invocate the devil to take them, soberly consider, that the company so often invited, will be terrible at last, when come.

IV. And, Lastly, Let us consider the eternity of the whole, the everlasting continuance of the miserable state of the damned in hell.

1. If I could, I would shew what eternity is; I mean, the creature's eternity. But who can measure the waters of the ocean; or who can tell you the days, years, and ages of eternity, which are infinitely more than the drops of the ocean? None can comprehend eternity, but the eternal God. Eternity is an ocean, whereof we shall never see the shore; it is a deep, where we can find no bottom; a labyrinth, from whence we cannot extricate ourselves, and where we shall ever lose the door. There are two things we may say of it. 1. It has a beginning. God's eternity has no beginning, but the creature's has. Once there was no lake of fire; and those who have been there for some hundreds of years, were once in time, as we now are. But, 2. It shall never have an end. The first who entered into the eternity of wo, is as far from the end of it, as the last who shall go thither will be at his entry. They who have launched out furthest into that ocean, are as far from land, as they were the first moment they went into it: and, thousands of ages after this, they will be as far from it as ever. Wherefore eternity, which is before us, is a duration that has a beginning, but no end. It is a beginning without a middle, a beginning without an end. After millions of years passed in it, still it is a beginning. God's wrath, in hell, will ever be the wrath to come.—But there is no middle in eternity. When millions of ages are past in eternity, what is past bears no proportion to what is to come: no, not so much as one drop of water, falling from the tip of one's finger, bears to all the waters of the ocean. There is no end of it: while God is, it shall be. It is an entry without an end to it; a continual succession of ages; a glass always running, which shall never run out.

Observe the continual succession of hours, days, months, and years, how one still follows upon another; and think of eternity,

wherein there is a continual succession without end. When you go out at night, and behold the stars of heaven, how they cannot be numbered for multitude, think of the ages of eternity; consider also, there is a certain definite number of stars, but no number of the ages of eternity. When you see water running, think how vain a thing it would be to sit down by it, and wait till it should run out, that you may pass over; observe how new water still succeeds to that which passes by you: and therein you have an image of eternity, which is a river that never dries up. They who wear rings have an image of eternity on their fingers; and they who handle the wheel have an emblem of eternity before them: for to which part soever of the ring or wheel we look, one will still see another part beyond it; and on whatever moment of eternity you meditate, there is still another beyond it. When you are abroad in the fields, and behold the blades of grass on the earth, which no man can reckon; think with yourselves, that, were as many thousands of years to come, as there are blades of grass on the ground, even those would have an end at length; but eternity will have none. When you look to a mountain, imagine in your hearts, how long would it be, ere that mountain should be removed, by a little bird coming but once every thousand years, and carrying away but one grain of the dust thereof at once: the mountain would at length be removed that way, and brought to an end; but eternity will never end. Suppose this with respect to all the mountains of the earth; nay, with respect to the whole globe itself: the grains of dust of which the whole of it is made up, are not infinite; and therefore the last grain would, at length, come to be carried away, as above: yet eternity would be, in effect, but beginning.

These are some rude draughts of eternity: and now add misery and wo to this eternity, what tongue can express it? what heart can conceive it? in what balance can that misery and that wo be weighed?

2. Let us take a view of what is eternal, in the state of the damned in hell. Whatever is included in the fearful torments of their state, is everlasting: therefore, all the doleful ingredients of their miserable state will be everlasting; they will never end. The text expressly declares the fire, into which they must depart, to be everlasting fire. And our Lord elsewhere tells us, that in hell, the fire never shall be quenched, Mark ix. 43; with an eye to the valley of Hinnom, in which, besides the before-mentioned fire, for burning the children to Molech, there was also another fire burning continually, to consume the dead carcases and filth of Jerusalem: so the Scripture, representing hell-fire by the fire of that val-

ley, speaks it not only to be most exquisite, but also everlasting. Seeing, then, the damned must depart, as cursed ones, into everlasting fire, it is evident that—

(1.) The damned themselves shall be eternal; they will have a being for ever, and will never be substantially destroyed or annihilated. To what end is the fire eternal, if those who are cast into it be not eternally in it? It is plain, the everlasting continuance of the fire is an aggravation of the misery of the damned. But, surely, if they be annihilated, or substantially destroyed, it would be all one to them, whether the fire be everlasting or not. Nay, but they depart into everlasting fire, to be everlastingly punished in it. Matt. xxv. 46, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." Thus the execution of the sentence is a certain discovery of the meaning of it. The worm, that dieth not, must have a subject to live in: they, who shall have no rest, day nor night, Rev. xiv. 11, but shall be "tormented day and night for ever and ever," chap. xx. 10, will certainly have a being for ever and ever, and not be brought into a state of eternal rest in annihilation. Destroyed indeed they shall be: but their destruction will be an everlasting destruction, 2 Thess. i. 9; a destruction of their well-being, but not of their being. What is destroyed, is not therefore annihilated: "Art thou come to destroy us?" said the devil unto Jesus Christ, Luke iv. 34. The devils are afraid of torment, not of annihilation," Matth. viii. 29, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" The state of the damned is indeed a state of death; but such a death it is, as is opposite only to a happy life; as is clear from other notions of their state, which necessarily include eternal existence,—of which before. As they who are dead in sin, are dead to God and holiness, yet live to sin; so dying in hell they live, but separated from God, and his favour, in which is life, Psalm xxx. 5. They shall ever be under the pangs of death; ever dying, but never dead, or absolutely void of life. How desirable would such a death be to them! but it will flee from them for ever. Could each one kill another there, or could they, with their own hands, tear themselves into lifeless pieces, their misery would quickly be at an end: but there they must live, who chose death, and refused life; for there death lives, and the end ever begins.

(2.) The curse shall lie upon them eternally, as the everlasting chain, to hold them in the everlasting fire; a chain that shall never be loosed, being fixed for ever about them, by the dreadful sentence of the eternal judgment. This chain, which spurns the united force of devils held fast by it, is too strong to be broken by men, who

being solemnly anathematized, and devoted to destruction, can never be recovered to any other use.

(3.) Their punishment shall be eternal; Matt. xxv. 46, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." They will be for ever separated from God and Christ, and from the society of the holy angels and saints; between whom and them an impassable gulf will be fixed, Luke xvi. 26, "Between us and you," says Abraham, in the parable, to the rich man in hell, "there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you, cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." They shall for ever have the horrible society of the devil and his angels. There will be no change of company for ever in that region of darkness. Their torment in the fire will be everlasting: they must live for ever in it. Several authors, both ancient and modern, tell us of earth-flax, or salamander's hairs, that cloth made of it, being cast into the fire, is so far from being burnt or consumed, that it is only made clean thereby, as other things are by washing. But however that is, it is certain the damned shall he tormented for ever and ever in hell-fire, and not substantially destroyed, Rev. xx. 10. And indeed nothing is annihilated by fire, but only dissolved. Of what nature soever hell-fire is, no question, the same God, who kept the bodies of the three children from burning in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, can also keep the bodies of the damned from any such dissolution by hell-fire, as may infer privation of life.

(4.) Their knowledge and sense of their misery shall be eternal, and they shall assuredly know that it will be eternal. How desirable would it be to them, to have their senses for ever locked up, and to lose the consciousness of their own misery! as one may rationally suppose it to fare at length with some, in the punishment of death inflicted on them on earth, and as it is with some mad people; but that agrees not with the notion of torment for ever and ever, nor the worm that dieth not. Nay, they will ever have a lively feeling of their misery, and strongest impressions of the wrath of God against them. And that dreadful intimation of the eternity of their punishment, made to them by their Judge, in their sentence, will fix such impressions of the eternity of their miserable state upon their minds, as they will never be able to lay aside; but will continue with them evermore, to complete their misery. This will fill them with everlasting despair; a most tormenting passion, which will continually rend their hearts, as it were, in a thousand pieces. To see floods of wrath ever coming, and never to cease; to be ever in torment, and to know that there shall never, never be a release, will be the topstone put on the misery of the

damned. If "hope deferred maketh the heart sick," Prov. xiii. 12, how killing will be hope rooted up, slain outright, and buried for ever out of the creature's sight! This will fill them with hatred and rage against God, their known irreconcileable enemy; and under it, they will roar for ever, like wild bulls in a net, and fill the pit with blasphemies evermore.

I might here shew the reasonableness of the eternity of the punishment of the damned: but, having already spoken of it, in vindicating the justice of God, in his subjecting men, in their natural state, to eternal wrath, I only remind you of three things: 1. The infinite dignity of the party offended by sin, requires an infinite punishment to be inflicted for the vindication of his honour; since the demerit of sin rises according to the dignity and excellence of the person against whom it is committed. The party offended is the great God, the chief good; the offender a vile worm; in respect of perfection, infinitely distant from God, to whom he is indebted for all that he ever had, implying any good or perfection whatever. This then requires an infinite punishment to be inflicted on the sinner; which since it cannot in him be infinite in value, must needs be infinite in duration, that is to say, eternal. Sin is a kind of infinite evil, as it wrongs an infinite God; and the guilt and defilement thereof is never taken away, but endures for ever, unless the Lord himself in mercy remove it. God, who is offended, is eternal; his being never comes to an end: the sinful soul is immortal, and the man shall live for ever: the sinner being without strength, Rom. v. 6, to expiate his guilt, can never put away the offence; therefore it ever remains, unless the Lord put it away himself, as in the elect, by his Son's blood. Wherefore the party offended, the offender, and the offence, ever remaining, the punishment cannot but be eternal. 2. The sinner would have continued the course of his provocations against God for ever without end, if God had not put a check to it by death. As long as they were capable of acting against him in this world, they did it: and therefore justly will he act against them, while he is; that is, for ever. God, who judges of the will, intents, and inclinations of the heart, may justly do against sinners, in punishing, as they would have done against him in sinning. 3. Though I put not the stress of the matter here, yet it is just and reasonable that the damned suffer eternally, since they will sin eternally in hell, gnashing their teeth, Matt. viii. 12, under their pain in rage, envy, and grudge; compare Acts vii. 54; Psal. cxii. 10; Luke xiii. 28; and blaspheming God there, Rev. xvi. 21, while they are "driven away in their wickedness," Prov. xiv. 32. That the wicked be punished for their wickedness, is just, and it is no ways

inconsistent with justice, that the being of the creature be continued for ever: wherefore, it is just, that the damned, continuing wicked eternally, do suffer eternally for their wickedness. The misery, under which they sin, can neither free them from the debt of obedience, nor excuse their sinning, and make it blameless. The creature, as a creature, is bound unto obedience to his Creator; and no punishment inflicted on him can free him from it, any more than the malefactor's prison, irons, whipping, and the like, set him at liberty again, to commit the crimes for which he is imprisoned or whipped. Neither can the torments of the damned excuse, or make blameless, their horrible sinning under them, any more than exquisite pains, inflicted upon men on earth, can excuse their murmuring, fretting, and blaspheming against God under them. It is not the wrath of God, but their own wicked nature, that is the true cause of their sinning under it; for the holy Jesus bore the wrath of God, without so much as one unbecoming thought of God, and far less any one unbecoming word.

Use I. Here is a measuring reed: O that men would apply it. 1. Apply it to your own time in this world, and you will find your time to be very short. A prospect of much time to come proves the ruin of many souls. Men will be reckoning their time by years, like that rich man, Luke xii. 19, 20, when, it may be, there are not many hours of it to run. But reckon as you will, laying your time to the measuring reed of eternity, you will see your age is as nothing. What a small and inconsiderable point is sixty, eighty, or a hundred years, in respect of eternity! Compared with eternity, there is a greater disproportion, than between a hair's breadth and the circumference of the whole earth. Why do we then sleep in such a short day, while we are in danger of losing rest through the long night of eternity? 2. Apply it to your endeavours for salvation, and they will be found very scanty. When men are pressed to diligence in their salvation work, they are ready to say, "To what purpose is this waste?" Alas! if it were to be judged by our diligence, what it is that we have in view; as to the most part of us, no man could thereby conjecture that we have eternity in view. If we duly considered eternity, we could not but conclude, that, to leave no appointed means of God unessayed, till we get our salvation secured—to refuse rest or comfort in any thing, till we are sheltered under the wings of the Mediator—to pursue our great interest with the utmost vigour—to cut off lusts dear as right hands and right eyes—to set our faces resolutely against all difficulties—and fight our way through all opposition made by the devil, the world, and the flesh—are, all of them together, little enough for eternity.

USE II. Here is a balance of the sanctuary, by which we may understand the lightness of what is falsely thought weighty; and the weight of some things, by many reckoned to be very light.

1. Some things seem very weighty, which, weighed in this balance, will be found very light. (1.) Weigh the world, and all that is in it, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, and the whole will be found light in the balance of eternity. Weigh herein all worldly profits, gains, and advantages; and you will quickly see, that a thousand worlds will not be adequate to the cost of the eternity of wo. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Matt. xvi. 26. Weigh the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, with the fire that is everlasting, and you shew yourselves to be fools and madmen, to run the hazard of the one for the other. (2.) Weigh your afflictions in this balance, and you will find the heaviest of them very light, in respect of the weight of eternal anguish. Impatience under affliction, especially when worldly troubles so imbitter men's spirits, that they cannot relish the glad tidings of the gospel, speaks great regardlessness of eternity. As a small and inconsiderable loss will be very little at heart with him who sees himself in danger of losing his whole estate; so troubles in the world will appear but light to him who has a lively view of eternity. Such a one will stoop and take up his cross, whatever it be, thinking it enough to escape eternal wrath. (3.) Weigh the most difficult and uneasy duties of religion here, and you will no more reckon the yoke of Christ insupportable. Repentance, and bitter mourning for sin, on earth, are very light in comparison of eternal weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth in hell. To wrestle with God in prayer, weeping and making supplication for the blessing in time, is far easier than to lie under the curse through all eternity. Mortification of the most beloved lust is a light thing in comparison with the second death in hell. (4.) Weigh your convictions in this balance. O! how heavy do those lie upon many, till they get them shaken off! They are not disposed to continue with them, but strive to get clear of them, as of a mighty burden. But the worm of an ill conscience will neither die nor sleep in hell, though we may now lull it asleep for a time. And certainly it is easier to entertain the sharpest convictions in this life, so that they lead us to Christ, than to have them fixed for ever in the conscience, and to be in hell totally and finally separated from him.

2. But, on the other hand, (1.) Weigh sin in this balance; and, though now it seems but a light thing to you, you will find it a weight sufficient to turn up an eternal weight of wrath upon you.

Even idle words, vain thoughts, and unprofitable actions, weighed in this balance, and considered as following the sinner into eternity, will each of them be heavier than the sand of the sea; time idly spent, will make a weary eternity. Now is your seed-time: thoughts, words, and actions, are the seed sown; eternity is the harvest. Though the seed now lies under the clod, disregarded by most men, even the least grain shall spring up at length; and the fruit will be according to the seed, Gal. vi. 3. "For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, that is, destruction; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." —(2.) Weigh in this balance your time and opportunities of grace and salvation, and you will find them very weighty. Precious time and seasons of grace, Sabbaths, communions, prayers, sermons, and the like, are by many, now-a-days, made light of; but the day is coming when one of these will be reckoned more valuable than a thousand worlds, by those who now have the least value for them. When they are gone for ever, and the loss cannot be retrieved, those will see the worth of them, who will not now see it.

Use III. and last. Be warned and stirred up to flee from the wrath to come. Mind eternity, and closely ply the work of your salvation. What are you doing, while you are not so doing? Is heaven a fable, or hell a false alarm? Must we live eternally, and shall we be at no more pains to escape everlasting misery? Will faint wishes take the kingdom of heaven by force? And will such drowsy endeavours, as most men satisfy themselves with, be accounted fleeing from the wrath to come? You who have already fled to Christ, up, and be doing: You who have begun the work, go on, and loiter not, but "work out your salvation with fear and trembling," Phil. ii. 12. "Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell," Matt. x. 28. Remember you are not yet ascended into heaven; you are but in your middle state. The everlasting arms have drawn you out of the gulf of wrath you were plunged into, in your natural state; they are still underneath you, that you can never fall down into it again: nevertheless, you have not yet got up to the top of the rock: the deep below you is frightful; look at it, and hasten your ascent. You who are yet in your natural state, lift up your eyes and take a view of the eternal state. Arise, ye profane persons, ye ignorant ones, ye formal hypocrites, strangers to the power of godliness, flee from the wrath to come. Let not the young venture to delay a moment longer, nor the old put off this work any more: "To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;" lest he swear in his wrath, that you shall never enter into his rest. It is no time to linger in a state of sin, as in Sodom

when fire and brimstone are coming down on it from the Lord. Take warning in time. They who are in hell, are not troubled with such warnings; but are enraged against themselves, because they slighted the warning when they had it.

Consider, I pray you, 1. How uneasy it is to lie one whole night on a soft bed in perfect health, when we fain would have sleep, but cannot get it, sleep being departed from us. How often should we in that case, wish for rest! how full of tossings to and fro! But ah! how dreadful must it be to lie in sorrow, wrapped up in scorching flames through eternity, in that place where they have no rest day nor night!—2. How terrible would it be, to live under violent pains of the cholic or gravel, for forty or sixty years together, without any intermission! Yet that is but a very small thing compared with eternal separation from God, the worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched.—3. Eternity is an awful thought; O long, long, endless eternity! But will not every moment, in eternity of wo, seem a month, and every hour a year, in that most wretched and desperate condition? Hence, ever and ever, as it were, a double eternity. The sick man in the night, tossing to and fro on his bed, says it will never be day; complains, that his pain ever continues, never, never abates. Are these petty time-eternities, which men form to themselves, in their own imaginations, so very grievous? Alas! then, how grievous, how utterly insupportable, must a real eternity of wo, and all manner of miseries, be!—4. There will be space enough there to reflect on all the ills of our heart and life, which we cannot get time to think of now; and to see that all that was said of the impenitent sinner's hazard, was true, and that the half was not told. There will be space enough in eternity to carry on delayed repentance, to rue one's follies when it is too late; and in a state past remedy, to speak forth there fruitless wishes, "O that I had never been born! that the womb had been my grave, and I had never seen the sun! O that I had taken warning in time, and fled from this wrath, while the door of mercy was standing open to me! O that I had never heard the gospel, that I had lived in some corner of the world, where a Saviour, and the great salvation, were not once named!" But all in vain. What is done cannot be undone; the opportunity is lost, and can never be retrieved; time is gone, and can never be recalled. Wherefore, improve time, while you have it, and do not wilfully ruin yourself, by stopping your ear to the gospel call.

And now, if you would be saved from the wrath to come, and never go into this place of torment, take no rest in your natural state; believe the sinfulness and misery of it, and labour to get out

of it quickly, fleeing unto Jesus Christ by faith. Sin in you is the seed of hell: and, if the guilt and reigning power of it be not removed in time, they will bring you to the second death in eternity. There is no way to get them removed, but by receiving Christ, as he is offered in the gospel, for justification and sanctification: and he is now offered to you with all his salvation, Rev. xxii. 12, 17, "And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst, come.—And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Jesus Christ is the Mediator of peace, and the fountain of holiness: he it is who delivereth us from the wrath to come. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Rom. viii. 1. And the terrors of hell, as well as the joys of heaven, are set before you, to stir you up to a cordial receiving of him, with all his salvation; and to incline you unto the way of faith and holiness, in which alone you can escape the everlasting fire. May the Lord himself make them effectual to that end!

Thus far of man's eternal state; which, because it is eternal, admits no succeeding one for ever.

A VIEW

OF THE

COVENANT OF GRACE,

FROM THE

SACRED RECORDS.

WHEREIN

THE PARTIES IN THAT COVENANT, THE MAKING OF IT, ITS PARTS, CONDITIONARY AND PROMISSORY, AND THE ADMINISTRATION THEREOF ARE DISTINCTLY CONSIDERED.

TOGETHER WITH

THE TRIAL OF A SAVING PERSONAL INBEING IN IT, AND THE WAY OF INSTATING SINNERS THEREIN, UNTO THEIR ETERNAL SALVATION.

TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED

A MEMORIAL CONCERNING PERSONAL AND FAMILY FASTING AND HUMILIATION, PRESENTED TO SAINTS AND SINNERS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

This Treatise, and the Memorial adjoined, being posthumous works of my father's, I thought it necessary to testify to the world, that they are published as he left them, being printed from his own Manuscript prepared for the press, without any addition or alteration whatsoever.

THOMAS BOSTON.

A VIEW

OF

THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

PSALM lxxxix. 3,

I have made a covenant with my chosen.

1 COR. xv. 45,

The last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

As man's ruin was originally owing to the breaking of the covenant of works, so his recovery, from the first to the last step thereof, is owing purely to the fulfilling of the covenant of grace; which covenant, being that wherein the whole mystery of our salvation lies, I am to essay the opening of, as the Lord shall be pleased to assist. And there is the more need of humble dependence on the Father of lights, through Jesus Christ his Son, for the manifestation of his Spirit in this matter, that whereas the first covenant is known, in part, by the light of nature, the knowledge of this second is owing entirely to revelation.

It was from this covenant the psalmist, in the verse immediately preceding the first text, took a comfortable view of a glorious building, infallibly going up in the midst of ruins; even a building of mercy: "For I have said, Mercy shall be built up for ever;" the ground of which confident assertion is, in our text, pointed out to be God's covenant with his chosen. From the type of the covenant of grace, namely, the covenant of royalty made unto David, he saw a building up of mercy for the royal family of Judah, when they were brought exceeding low. From the substance of it, he saw a building of mercy for sinners of mankind, who were laid in ruins by the breach of the first covenant. This is that new building free grace set on foot for us; into which they that believe are instantly thereupon received, and where once received, they shall dwell for

ever; a building of mercy, in which every stone, from the bottom to the top, from the foundation stone to the cope-stone, is pure mercy, rich and free mercy to us.

Of this building of mercy I shall drop a few words.

And, 1. The plan of it was drawn from all eternity, in the council of the Trinity: for it is according to the eternal purpose purposed in Jesus Christ, Eph. iii. 11. The objects of mercy, the time and place, the way and means, of conferring it on them, were designed particularly, before man was miserable, yea, before he was at all. 2. The builder is God himself, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. iii. 9, "Ye are God's building." All hands of the glorious Trinity are at work in this building. The Father chose the objects of mercy, and gave them to the Son to be redeemed; the Son purchased redemption for them; and the Holy Ghost applies the purchased redemption unto them. But it is specially attributed to the Son, on the account of his singular agency in the work: Zech. vi. 12, "Behold the man whose name is the Branch—He shall build the temple of the Lord:" ver. 13, "Even He shall build the temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the glory." 3. The foundation was laid deep in the eternal counsel; beyond the reach of the eyes of men or angels. Paul considering it, cries out, "O the depth!" Rom. xi. 33. "For who hath known the mind of the Lord or who hath been his counsellor?" ver. 34. 4. It is more than five thousand years since this building rose above ground. And the first stone of it that appeared, was a promise, a promise of a Saviour, made in paradise after the fall, Gen. iii. 15, namely, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. Here was mercy. And mercy was laid upon mercy. Upon promising mercy was laid quickening mercy, whereby our lost first parents were enabled to believe the promise; and upon quickening mercy was laid pardoning mercy to them; and upon that again sanctifying and establishing mercy; and at length glorifying mercy. 5. The cement is blood; the blood of Jesus Christ the Mediator, which is the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. No saving mercy for sinners could consist, nor could one mercy lie firm upon another in the building, without being cemented with that precious blood; but by it the whole building consists, and stands firm for ever, Heb. ix. 22, 23, and vii. 24, 25. 6. Ever since the time it appeared above ground, it has been going on. And many hands have been employed, to serve in carrying on the work. In the first ages of the world, patriarchs were employed in it, such as Adam, Enoch, and Noah; in the middle ages, prophets, priests, and Levites; in these the last ages, the apostles, and other extraordinary officers, and ordinary ministers of

the gospel. Great has been the opposition made to the building from the beginning, by Satan and his agents, both in the way of violence and deceit; yet has it all along been going on still. And now it is come far above mid-height; it is drawing towards the top, and the time when the last stone shall be laid thereon; for it is evident, we are far advanced in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, wherein the mystery of God is to be finished, Rev. x. 7. 7. The cope-stone will be laid on it at the last day: at what time the promise will receive its full accomplishment, in the complete salvation of all the objects of mercy, then to be advanced unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," Eph. iv. 13. In that day our Lord Jesus Christ, the great builder, "shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings," even the last and crowning mercy, saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And then shall they dwell in the building of mercy perfected, and sing of mercies for ever and ever. 8. *Lastly*, The foundation on which it stands, is a firm one. It is necessary that it be so: for a building of mercy to sinners, from a holy just God, is a building of huge weight, more weighty than the whole fabric of heaven and earth: and if it should fall, all is ruined a second time, without any more hope of relief. But it is a sure foundation, being God's everlasting covenant: "I have made a covenant with my chosen."

In which words, together with the second text, there are four things to be considered. 1. The foundation on which the building of mercy stands; to wit, A covenant. 2. The parties-contractors in that covenant. 3. The making of it. And, 4, The nature of it.

I. The foundation on which the building of mercy stands, is a covenant, a divine covenant, a sure one. The first building for man's happiness was a building of bounty and goodness, but not of mercy; for man was not in misery when it was a-rearing up. And it was founded on a covenant too; namely, on the covenant of works, made with the first Adam: but he broke the covenant, and the whole building tumbled down in an instant. But this is another covenant, and of another nature. In the type indeed, and shadow, it is the covenant of royalty with David, 2 Sam. vii. 11—17; which was a foundation of mercy to his family, securing the continuance of it, and that as a royal family. Howbeit, in the antitype and truth, it is the covenant of grace, the covenant of eternal life and salvation to sinners, the spiritual seed of the head thereof, to be given them in the way of free grace and mercy, Psalm lxxxix. 2, 4, 29, 36; and in which they are freed from the curse, so that it cannot reach them, notwithstanding of their failures; but the Lord

deals with them as his children still, though offending children, ver. 30—33; and all by the means of Jesus Christ the Saviour, the mighty One, ver. 19. This is the foundation of the whole building of mercy to sinners in their low estate, into which they were brought by Adam's fall. The revelation, promulgation, and offer made unto the sons of men, of this covenant which lay hid in the depths of the eternal counsel, is called the gospel; the glad tidings of a new covenant for life and salvation to sinners.

II. The parties-contractors in this covenant are, God, and his chosen, the last Adam: for it is evident from the nature of the things here spoken of, ver. 3, 4, and from 2 Sam. vii. 8, that these words, "I have made a covenant with my chosen," are the Lord's own words. Both heaven and earth were concerned in this covenant; for it was a covenant of peace between them: and accordingly the interests of both are seen to by the parties-contractors. 1. On Heaven's side is God himself, the party-proposer of the covenant, "I have made a covenant with my chosen." He was the offended party, yet the motion for a covenant of peace comes from him; a certain indication of the good-will of the whole glorious Trinity towards the recovery of lost sinners. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, beholding a lost world, his mercy seeks a vent, that it may be shown to the miserable; but justice stands in the way of the egress and building of mercy, without there be a covenant whereby it may be satisfied. Then saith the Father, "The first covenant will not serve the purpose of mercy; there must be a new bargain: but the lost creatures have nothing left, to contract for themselves; unless another take the burden upon him for them, there is no remedy in the case: they cannot choose such an one for themselves; I will make a choice for them, and make the covenant with my chosen." 2. On man's side, then, is God's chosen, or chosen one; for the world is singular. This chosen one, in the type, the covenant of royalty, is David; but in the antytipe, the covenant of grace, it is the Son of God, the last Adam, even Christ the chosen of God, Luke xxiii. 35. The truth is, such great things are said of the party with whom this covenant was made, of his seed, and of the efficacy of this covenant, as can fully agree to none but Christ and his spiritual seed, vers. 4, 27, 29, 36, 37. The royal family of Judah, the house of David, never recovered their ancient splendour, after the Babylonish captivity; with a view to which time, this psalm seems to have been penned. Their kingdom is extinct many ages ago; and the grandeur of that family, according to the flesh, is quite sunk. But the promise made to David in the

covenant of royalty, still flourisheth, and will flourish for ever in Jesus Christ, the top-branch of the family of David. How then can it be, but that, in the perpetual building of mercy, mentioned ver. 2, and the establishing of David's seed, and building up his throne to all generations, ver. 4, Christ himself is chiefly aimed at? And indeed he only was the mighty One, fit for the vast undertaking in this covenant, ver. 19: and him the Father points out to us, as his elect, or chosen One, Isa. xlii. 1.

III. As to the making of this covenant between the contracting parties: the Father made it with his own Son, I have made a covenant with my chosen, and that before the world began, Tit. i. 2. By their mutual agreement thereto, this covenant was completely made from eternity; even as the covenant of works with the first Adam was, before we were in being. The original text calls it cutting off a covenant; which phrase is taken from that ancient usage of cutting off a beast, by cutting it asunder, at the making of a covenant, Jer. xxxiv. 17. It intimates this covenant to be a covenant by sacrifice: wherein the party-contractor on man's side was the sacrifice, and divine justice the sword that cut it asunder, according to Zech. xiii. 7, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd." And withal it imports the inviolableness and pepetuity of the covenant made; no more for ever to be dissolved, than the parts of the beast cut off one from the other, to be joined again as formerly.

IV. For the nature of this covenant; there are five things belonging thereto which appear from the texts; namely, 1. The being of a representation in it. 2. The design for which it was set on foot. 3. That there are in it a condition; and 4. A promise; and 5. Into whose hands the administration of it is put.

1. There is a representation taking place in this covenant. As it was in the first covenant, so it was likewise in the second; the party-contractor and undertaker on man's side, was a representative, representing and sustaining the persons of others. This appears, in that the chosen One with whom the covenant was made, is called the last Adam: for it is plain, he is so called in relation to the first Adam, who was the figure (or type) of him, Rom. v. 14. namely, in that like as the first Adam representing his seed in the covenant of works, brought sin and death on them; so he representing his, brings righteousness and life to them; as the apostle teacheth at large in that chapter.

2. The design of this covenant was life, the most valuable interest of mankind. "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit,"

to wit, to give life to his seed. So it is a covenant of life, as the covenant of Levi, a type thereof, is expressly called, Mal. ii. 5. The first covenant was a covenant of life too; but there is this difference, to wit, that the first was for life in perfection to upright man having life before; the second, for life in perfection to sinful man legally and morally dead. The parties contracted for in this second covenant, were considered as under the bands of death, absolutely void of life; and therefore utterly incapable to act for helping themselves. They lay like dry bones scattered about the grave's mouth, before the parties-contractors; justice forbidding to give them life, but upon terms consistent with, and becoming its honour.

3. The condition of the covenant, the terms of that life, agreed to by the representative, is implied in that he was the last Adam, namely, to go through with what the first Adam had stuck in. Adam, in the covenant of works, stumbled in the course of his obedience, and fell; and by his fall was quite disabled to begin it anew: he thereby came under the penalty of that covenant also, but was utterly unable to discharge it. So the last Adam comes in the room of the first, not as the first Adam stood in his integrity; for in that case there was no place for a second Adam; but as he lay a broken man under the first bargain. And coming in his room in this case, his business was to satisfy the demands of the first covenant, in behalf of his seed. These demands were now run up high, quite beyond what they were to innocent Adam: the penalty was become payable, as well as the principal sum. Wherefore the first covenant being ingrossed in the second, is declared broken; and the principal and penalty being summed up together, the clearing of the whole is laid upon the last or second Adam, as the condition of the second covenant.

4. The promise of the covenant to be, upon that condition, performed by the party-contractor on Heaven's side, is implied in these words, "I have made a covenant with" (in the original, to) "my chosen;" that is, "I have made a covenant, binding and obliging myself by solemn promise to my chosen One, for such and such benefits, upon the condition therein stated and agreed to." Compare the following clause, "I have sworn unto David my servant." The nature of this promise will be inquired into in the due place.

5. *Lastly*, The administration of this covenant is put into the hands of the party-contractor on man's side: "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Each of the contracting parties being God, it was not possible that either party should fail, or that the last Adam should break, as the first had done. Wherefore the time

of Christ's fulfilling of the condition of the covenant being prefixed by the Father, God took Christ's single bond for sufficient security, and thereupon constituted him administrator of the covenant. Those whom he represented, were considered as being under death, which in the language of the covenant, is a very extensive term: the Spirit and life were to be purchased by him, and did belong to the promise of the covenant. So, upon the credit of his fulfilling the condition of the covenant in due time, the fulness of the Spirit, and eternal life, were lodged in him, to be communicated by him: Rev. iii. 1, "These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God." 1 John v. 11, "God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son." John xvii. 2, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life." Thus was he made a quickening spirit.

Now the DOCTRINE of these texts thus compared and explained, is,

That the covenant of grace for life and salvation to lost sinners of mankind, was made with Jesus Christ the last Adam; and he constituted administrator of it.

In handling of this weighty subject, I deem it not necessary to insist to prove that there is a covenant of grace; the being of which is obvious from the texts, and many other Scriptures, such as, Isa. xlii. 6; xlix. 8; and liv. 10; Heb. viii. 6; and xiii. 20. But the following account of it shall be ranged under these six heads: namely,

1. The parties in the covenant of grace.
2. The making of that covenant.
3. The parts of it.
4. The administration of it.
5. The trial of a saving personal inbeing in it.
6. The way of instating sinners personally and savingly in it.

HEAD I.

THE PARTIES IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

In all covenants, of whatsoever nature they be, whether covenants of absolute promise, or conditional ones, there must needs be distinct parties: for howbeit one may decree, resolve, or purpose with himself, without another party; yet one's covenanting or bar-

gaining, vowing or promising, speaks an obligation thence arising to another distinct party. Accordingly, in the covenant of grace there are three parties to be considered; 1. The party-contractor on heaven's side; 2. The party-contractor on man's side; and, 3. The party contracted and undertaken for. Of which in order. And,

I. OF THE PARTY-CONTRACTOR ON HEAVEN'S SIDE.

As it was the covenant of works in this point, so it is likewise in the covenant of grace; the party upon the one side is God himself, and he only. There was no need of any other to see to the interests of heaven in this covenant; and there was no other when it was made, being made from eternity, before the world began, Tit. i. 2. This is plain from the words of the covenant, "I will be their God," Jer. xxxi. 33.

But whether God is herein to be considered personally or essentially, is not quite so clear. Some divines think, that the Father, personally considered, namely, as the first person of the glorious Trinity, is the party-contractor on heaven's side; others, that God, essentially considered, that is, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is that party-contractor. But however we conceive of that matter, we are assured from the holy oracles, that these three are one God; and judge, that, according to the Scripture, it may be safely said, that God essentially considered, was the party-contractor in the person of the Father. Hereby it is owned, that the Son and the Holy Ghost have their part in the covenant, on heaven's side, as the party offended by man's sin; and, in the meantime, a peculiar agency in this great work of power and authority, on that side, is attributed to the Father; as there is unto the Son, on man's side.

And that of the party-contractor on heaven's side we may conceive aright in this matter, these two things are, in the first place, to be taken notice of. 1. He from all eternity decreed the creation of man after his own image, and the making of the covenant of works with him, in time. All things brought forth in time, lay from eternity in the womb of God's decree; in virtue whereof they have their being in time: for which cause the decree is said to bring forth, as a woman doth a child, Zeph. ii. 2. And the creation of angels and men, with the providence about them, made many lines in the volume of the sealed book of the decrees. God self-sufficient needed neither man nor angel: but, for the manifestation of his own glory, he purposed from eternity to create them; and moreover, to enter into such a covenant with man, as one should therein represent the whole family; sovereign pleasure meanwhile taking another

method with the angelic tribe: but withal purposing to give both the one and the other a sufficient ability to stand in their integrity, if they would. Thus, from eternity, the covenant of works, in all the parts and appurtenances thereof, was before the eternal mind; though being made with a mere man, it could not actually be entered into, till once man was created. But, "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world," Acts xv. 18. 2. He decreed also from eternity, to permit the first man, the representative of the whole family, to fall, and so to break the covenant, and involve himself, and all his posterity in ruins. It is evident from the spotless holiness of God, and the nature of the thing, that the divine permission was not the cause of man's fall; and from the necessary dependence of the creature upon the Creator, that without it, he could not have fallen. But the sovereign Lord of the creatures, permitted the fall of man for his own holy ends, purposing to bring about good from it.

Now, God, the party contractor on heaven's side in the covenant of grace, is to be considered in that matter in a threefold view.

1. He is to be considered in it as an offended God; offended with all the sins of all mankind, original and actual. Looking upon the children of men, the whole mass of mankind appeared in the eyes of his glory corrupt and loathsome, the very reverse of his holiness: he saw them all gone aside, together become filty, none doing good, no not one, Psalm xiv. 2, 3. In the first covenant, God contracted with man himself as a friend, without the interposition of a Mediator: but in the second covenant it was not so, and it could not be so; for in it man was considered as a fallen creature, a transgressor of the law, and an enemy to God; and it is a covenant of reconciliation, a covenant of peace, for those who had been at war with heaven.

2. But withal God is to be considered herein as a God purposeing and decreeing from eternity to manifest the glory of his free grace, love, and mercy, in the salvation of some of mankind lost. Accordingly, we are said to be saved in time, "according to his own purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. Without such a purpose of grace in God, there could never have been such a covenant of grace. But the sovereign Lord of the creatures overlooking the fallen angels as to any purpose of mercy, entertained thoughts of love and peace towards fallen mankind, purposing in himself to make some of them everlasting monuments of his free grace and mercy, partakers of life and salvation; and so set on foot the covenant of grace.

3. *Lastly*, Yet we are to consider him also in this matter as a just

God, who cannot but do right, give sin a just recompence, and magnify his holy law, and make it honourable, Gen. xviii. 25; Heb. ii. 2; Isa. xlii. 21. Upon the motion for extending mercy to sinners of mankind, the justice of God interposeth, pleading that mercy cannot be shewn them, but upon terms agreeable to law and justice. And indeed it was neither agreeable to the nature of God, nor to his truth in his word, to erect a throne of grace on the ruins of his exact justice, nor to shew mercy in prejudice of it. Now, the justice of God required, that the law which was violated, should be fully satisfied and the honour thereof repaired by suffering and obedience: the former such as might satisfy the penal sanction of the law, and the latter, the commanding part of it. The which being quite beyond the reach of the sinners themselves, they behoved to die without mercy, unless another, who could be accepted as a sufficient surety, should undertake for them, as a second Adam, coming in their room and stead, as they lay ruined by the breach of the covenant of works.

Thus stood the impediments in the way of mercy to fallen man, quite insuperable to him, or any of his fellow creatures; and the covenant of grace was made for removing those impediments out of the way, and that it might be the channel wherein the whole rich flood of saving mercy might flow freely, for the quickening, purging, sanctifying, and perfecting of lost sinners of mankind, who were under the bands of death and the curse, through the breach of the first covenant by the first Adam.

From what is said on this point, we may draw this inference, to wit, That the redemption of the soul is precious. The salvation of lost sinners was a greater work than the making of the world: the powerful word commanded, and this last was done; but the former was not to be compassed, but with more ado.

II. OF THE PARTY-CONTRACTOR ON MAN'S SIDE.

We have seen, that upon the one side, in the covenant of grace, is God himself. Now, upon the other side is Jesus Christ the Son of God, with his spiritual seed, Heb. ii. 13, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given me:" the former, as the party-contractor and undertaker; the latter, as the party contracted and undertaken for: a good reason for his name "Immanuel, which being interpreted, is, God with us," Matt. i. 23.

The party-contractor then with God, in the covenant of grace, is our Lord Jesus Christ. He alone managed the interests of men in this eternal bargain: for at the making of it none of them were in

being; nor, if they had been, would they have been capable of affording any help.

Now, Jesus Christ the party-contractor on man's side, in the covenant of grace, is, according to our texts, to be considered in that matter as the last or second Adam, head and representative of a seed, lost sinners of mankind, the party contracted for. And thus he sisted himself Mediator between an offended just God, and offending men guilty before him. In which point lay one main difference betwixt the first Adam and the last Adam: for there is one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom," 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. And so the covenant of grace, which could not be made immediately with sinners, was made with Christ the last Adam, their head and representative, mediating between God and them; therefore called Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, to whom we come by believing, Heb. xii. 22, 24.

The term Mediator is not, to my observation, applied in the holy Scripture to any other except Moses, Gal. iii. 19, "The law—was ordained by angels in the hand of a Mediator." And of him, a typical mediator, it is worth observing, that he was not only an inter-messenger between God and Israel; but in God's renewing his covenant, in a way of reconciliation, after the breaking of the tables, the covenant was made with him, as their head and representative, Exod. xxxiv. 27, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel." This refers unto the gracious answer made to Moses' prayer, ver. 9, "Pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance." Ver. 10, "And he" namely, the Lord, "said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels," &c. Ver. 28, "And he wrote upon the tables" to wit, the new ones, "the words of the covenant, the ten commandments." Now, Moses was alone on the mount with God during the whole time of this transaction; and in it the Lord speaks of him and the people as one, all along.

For clearing of this purpose anent the party-contractor on man's side, I shall, 1. Evince, that the covenant of grace was made with Christ as the last Adam, head and representative of a seed; and, 2. Shew why it was so made.

First, That the covenant of grace, the second covenant, was made with Christ as the last or second Adam, head and representative of a seed, to wit, his spiritual seed, appears from the following considerations.

1. Covenants typical of the covenant of grace were made or established with persons representing their respective seed. Thus

it was in the typical covenant in our text, the covenant of royalty made with David, an undoubted type of the covenant of grace. In it David was God's servant, having a seed comprehended with him therein, Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4. He was an eminent type of Christ; who is therefore called David, Hos. iii. 5, "Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king." And the benefits of the covenant of grace are called the sure mercies of David, Isa. lv. 3. Thus was it also in the covenant of the day and night, (Jer. xxxiii. 20,) established with Noah and his sons, representatives of their seed, the new world, Gen. ix. 9, "Behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you." And that this covenant was a type of the covenant of grace, appears, from its being made upon a sacrifice, chap. viii. 20, 21, 22; and from the sign and token of it, the rainbow, chap. ix. 13, appearing round about the throne, Rev. iv. 3; but especially from the nature and import of it, to wit, that there should not be another deluge, Gen. ix. 11; the substance of which is plainly declared, Isa. liv. 9, "As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." Ver. 10, "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." And such also was the covenant of the land of Canaan, made with Abraham representing his seed, Gen. xv. 18, and afterwards confirmed by oath, chap. xxii. 16, 17. In all which he was an eminent type of Christ, the true Abraham, father of the multitude of the faithful, who, upon God's call, left heaven his native country, and came and sojourned among the cursed race of mankind, and there offered up his own flesh and blood a sacrifice unto God, and so became the true heir of the world, and received the promises for his spiritual seed; the sum whereof is given by Zacharias in his account of the covenant with Abraham, Luke i. 72, "To remember his holy covenant:" ver. 73, "The oath which he sware to our father Abraham," ver. 74, "That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear," ver. 75, "in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life." And finally, thus it was in the covenant of everlasting priesthood made with Phinehas, another type of the covenant of grace. In it Phinehas stood a representative of his seed, Numb. xxv. 13, "And he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenat of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel." And therein he typified Jesus Christ, repre-

senting his spiritual seed in the covenant of grace: for it is evident, that it is in Christ, who made the great atonement for sinners, the everlasting priesthood promised to Phinehas, hath its full accomplishment: his spiritual seed partaking of the same in him; according to Psalm cx. 4, "Thou art a priest for ever." Rev. i. 6, "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father."

Now, forasmuch as these typical covenants were made or established with parties standing therein as public persons, heads, and representatives of their seed; it natively follows, that the covenant of grace typified by them, was made with Christ as the head and representative of his spiritual seed: for whatsoever is attributed to any person or thing as a type, hath its accomplishment really and chiefly in the person or thing typified.

2. Our Lord Jesus Christ being, in the phraseology of the Holy Ghost, the last Adam, the reason hereof cannot be taken from the nature common to the first Adam and him; for all mankind partake of that; but from their common office of federal headship and representation, in the respective covenants touching man's eternal happiness; the which is peculiar unto Adam, and the man Christ. Accordingly, Adam is called the first man, and Christ the second man, 1 Cor. xv. 47; but Christ is no otherwise the second man, than as he is the second federal head, or the representative in the second covenant; as Adam was the first federal head, or the representative in the first covenant. Agreeable to which, the apostle represents Adam as the head of the earthy men, and Christ as the head of the heavenly men, ver. 48; the former being those who bear Adam's image, namely, all his natural seed; the latter, those who partake of the image of Christ, namely, his spiritual seed, ver. 49. All this is confirmed from Adam's being a figure or type of Christ, which the apostle expressly asserts, Rom. v. 14; and from the parallel he draws betwixt them two, namely, that as by Adam's covenant-breaking, sin and death came on all that were his, so by Christ's covenant-keeping, righteousness and life come to all that are his, vers. 17, 18, 19. Wherefore, as the first covenant was made with Adam, as the head and representative of his natural seed; so the second covenant was made with Christ, as the head and representative of his spiritual seed.

3. As the first man was called Adam, that is to say, man; he being the head representative of mankind, the person in whom God treated with all men, his natural seed in the first covenant; and, on the other hand, all men therein represented by him, do, in the language of the Holy Ghost, go under the name of Adam, Psalm xxix. 5, 11. "Surely every man" in the original it is, all Adam "is va-

nity:" so Christ bears the name of his spiritual seed, and they on the other hand bear his name; a plain evidence of their being one in the eye of the law, and of God's treating with him as their representative in the second covenant. Israel is the name of the spiritual seed, Rom. ix. 6; and our Lord Jesus Christ is called by the same name, Isa. xlix 3. "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified;" as several learned and judicious commentators do understand it; and is evident from the whole context, vers. 1, 2, 4—9. The truth is, Christ is here so called with a peculiar solemnity; for the original text stands precisely thus, "Thou art my servant; Israel, in whom I will glorify myself:" that is, thou art Israel representative, in whom I will glorify myself, and make all mine attributes illustrious; as I was dishonoured, and they darkened, by Israel the collective body of the spiritual seed. And this leads us to a natural and unstrained interpretation of that passage, Psalm xxiv. 6. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob;" that is, in other words, that long for the appearing (Prov. vii. 15; Gen. xxxii. 30.) of the Messias the Lord whom the old testament church did so seek; a pledge of whose coming to his temple. (Mal. iii. 1.) was the bringing in of the ark into the tabernacle that David had erected for it, on which occasion that Psalm was penned. Accordingly it follows immediately, ver. 7, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." And in another Psalm penned on the same occasion, and expressly said to have been delivered on that very day into the hand of Asaph, 1 Chron. xvi. 1, 7, that is the expression found, ver. 11, "Seek his face continually;" justly to be interpreted, agreeable to the circumstances of the main thing which David through the Spirit had in view that day, namely, the coming of the Messias. Thus, Christ bears the name of his spiritual seed; and they, on the other hand, bear his name too: 1 Cor. xii. 12, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ."

4. The promises were made to Christ as the second Adam, the head and representative of his seed: Gal. iii. 16, "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." I own, that here, even as in the text immediately before cited, is meant Christ mystical, the head and members. It is to them that the promises are here said to be made; but primarily to the head, secondarily to the members in him; even as the promise of life in the first covenant, was primarily made to Adam as the head, and

secondarily to all his natural seed in him. Thus, in the typical covenant with Abraham, the promises of the earthly inheritance were primarily made to Abraham himself, and secondarily to his seed according to the flesh. And even so the promise of the eternal inheritance plainly stands made to Christ, Tit. i. 2, "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began;" when there was none but Christ to whom that promise could be made personally. Accordingly the covenant is said to be made with the house of Israel, namely, the Spiritual Israel; yet are the promises of it directed, not to them, but to another person, Heb. viii. 10, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." The reason of which plainly appears, in the promises being made to Christ as their head and representative. Now, forasmuch as these promises belong to the covenant of grace, which is therefore called the covenants of promise, Eph. ii. 12, it is manifest, that if they were made to Christ as the head and representative of a seed, the covenant of grace was made with him as such; and he to whom they were primarily made, was surely the party-contractor therein.

5. *Lastly*, This federal headship of Christ, and his representing his spiritual seed in the covenant of grace, appears from his suretiship in that covenant, the better testament, whereof Jesus was made a surety, Heb. vii. 22. Now, he became surety for them in the way of satisfaction for their debt of punishment and obedience; and that taking the whole burden on himself, as for persons utterly unable to answer for themselves. This will afterwards fall in to be cleared. Meanwhile, such a surety is a true representative of the party he is surety for, and one person with them in the eye of the law. Hence, not only is Christ said to have been made sin for us, 2 Cor. v. 21, to have had the iniquity of us all laid on him, Isa. liii. 6, and to have died for us, Rom. v. 8; but also we are said to have been crucified with Christ, Gal. ii. 20, to be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21, yea, to be raised up together, and glorified, being made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 6, and to be made alive in Christ, as we die in Adam, 1 Cor. xv. 22. All which necessarily requires this his headship and representation in the covenant.

And thus it appears, that the second covenant was made with Christ as the last or second Adam, head and representative of his spiritual seed.

Secondly, We are to inquire, wherefore the second covenant, the covenant of grace, was so made? And this shall be accounted for in the following particulars.

1. The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the last Adam, head and representative of his spiritual seed, that infinite love might have an early vent, even from eternity. The special love of God to the spiritual seed took vent in the covenant of grace. And that love and that covenant are of the same eternal date: as the love was everlasting or eternal, Jer. xxxi. 3, so was the covenant, Heb. xiii. 20; Tit. i. 2. But since the seed are but of yesterday, the covenant of grace behoved to be like the covenant of works, a yesterday's covenant, a time-covenant, if it was not made with Christ as their representative; it could not otherwise have been an eternal covenant. The promise of eternal life, which is undoubtedly a promise of the covenant of grace, could not otherwise have been of so ancient a date, as before the world began, as the apostle says it is, Tit. i. 2. How could an eternal covenant be originally made with creatures of time, but in their eternal head and representative? Or how could an eternal covenant be personally made with them, by way of personal application to them, had it not been from eternity made with another as their head and representative? But in this method of infinite wisdom, free love took an early vent; not waiting the slow motion of its objects creeping out of the womb of time, in which many of them lie wrapt up, even to this day. But as princes sometimes do, by proxy, marry young princesses, before they are marriageable, or capable to give their consent; so God, in his infinite love, married to himself all the spiritual seed, in and by Jesus Christ as their representative, not only before they were capable of consenting, but before they were at all. The which they do afterwards, in their effectual calling, approve of by faith, and give their consent personally to; and so they enjoy God as their God, and God hath them as his people: John xx. 17, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."

2. Otherwise it could not have been made at all a conditional covenant answering the design of it. This covenant taking place only upon the breach of the first covenant, the great design of it was, that dead sinners might have life, as was before observed. Now, in order to this, a holy just God stood upon conditions, without performing of which that life was not to be given: and they were high conditions, Psalm xl. 6, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire." 1 Thess. v. 9, 10, "Jesus Christ, who died for us, that—we should live." But how could an effectual conditional covenant for life be made with dead sinners, otherwise than in a representative? Dead souls cannot perform any condition for life at all which can be pleasing to God. They must needs have life before they can

do any thing of that nature, be it never so small a condition: therefore a conditional covenant for life, could not be made with sinners in their own persons; especially considering, that the conditions for life were so high, that man at his best state was not able to perform them. Wherefore, if such a covenant was made at all, it behoved to be made with Christ as their representative, Rom. viii. 3. 4.

3. It was so ordered, to the end it might be unto us poor sinners a covenant of grace indeed. It is evident from the holy Scriptures, that this covenant was designed for exalting the free grace of God; and that it is so framed, as to be a covenant of pure grace, and not of works, in respect of us, whatever it was in respect of Christ: Rom. iv. 16, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." Eph. ii. 9, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." And at this rate, indeed, it is a covenant of pure grace; and all ground of boasting is taken away from us; the Lord Jesus Christ himself, as representative, being sole undertaker and performer of the conditions thereof. But it is not so, if it is made with the sinner himself, standing as principal party, contracting with God, and undertaking and performing the conditions of the covenant for life: for how low soever these conditions, undertaken and wrought by the sinner in his own person, are supposed to be, the promise of the covenant is made to them; and so, according to the Scripture-reckoning, it is a covenant of works, Rom. iv. 4, "Now to him that worketh, is "the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt;" and betwixt Adam's covenant and such a covenant, there is no difference, but in degree, which leaves it still of the same kind.

4. This method was taken, that the communication of righteousness and life might be in as compendious a way, as the communication of sin and death was: "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," Rom. v. 19. The covenant of works having been made with Adam, as a representative of his natural seed, upon the breaking thereof, sin and death are communicated to them all from him as a deadly head. This being so, it was not agreeable to the method of divine procedure with men, to treat with those predestinated unto salvation severally, as principal parties, each contracting for himself in the new covenant for life; but to treat for them all with one public person, who, through his fulfilling the covenant, should be a quickening head to them, from whence life might be derived to them, in as compendious a way, as death was from the first Adam. For his mercies are above all his other works.

5. *Lastly*, The covenant of grace was so made, that it might be a

sure covenant; even to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, Rom. iv. 16. The first covenant was made with a mere creature, as a principal party, and contractor: and though he was a holy and righteous man, yet was he so fickle and unstable, that he failed of performing the condition he undertook; and so the benefit of the promise was lost: wherefore fallen men were not at all fit to be principal parties, or parties-contractors, in the new covenant, wherein the promise was to be sure, and not to miss of an accomplishment. They being then wholly a broken company, not to be trusted in the matter, Jesus Christ the Son of God was constituted head of the new covenant, to act for, and in name of the spiritual seed: and that to the end, the covenant being in this manner sure in point of the fulfilling of the condition, might be also sure in point of the accomplishment of the promise. And this is the very hinge of the stability of the covenant of grace, according to the Scripture: Psalm lxxxix. 28, "My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him." Ver. 22, "The enemy shall not exact upon him;" or, as others read it, and I think justly, "The enemy shall not beguile him," namely, as he did the first Adam. The original phrase is elliptical, *q. d.* The enemy shall not beguile (his soul, Jer. xxxvii. 9.) in him.

Before I leave this point, I offer the following inferences from it.

Inf. I. The covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace, are not two distinct covenants, but one and the same covenant. I know that many divines do express themselves otherwise in this matter; and that upon very different views, some of which are no ways injurious to the doctrine of free grace. But this I take to be Scripture truth, and a native consequent of the account given of the covenant of grace in our Larger Catechism, to wit, "That the covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed:" Gal. iii. 16. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ," Rom. v. 15, to the end. Isa. liii. 10, 11, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," &c. So the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace are but two names of one and the same second covenant, under different considerations. By a covenant of redemption is meant a bargain of buying and selling: and such a covenant it was to Christ only; for as much as he alone engaged to pay the price of our redemption, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. By a covenant of grace, is meant a bargain

whereby all is to be had freely: and such a covenant it is to us only, to whom the whole of it is of free grace; God himself having provided the ransom, and thereupon made over life and salvation to us, by free promise, without respect to any work of ours, as the ground of our right thereto.

To confirm this, consider, (1.) That, in Scripture reckoning, the covenants for life and happiness to man are but two in number, whereof the covenant of works is one: Gal. iv. 24, "These are the *two covenants*; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage," namely, generating bond children, excluded from the inheritance, ver. 30. This is a distinguishing character of the covenant of works; for such are indeed the children of that covenant, but not the children of the covenant of grace under any dispensation thereof. These two covenants are called, the old covenant, and the new covenant; and the old is called the first, which speaks the new to be the second: Heb. viii. 13, "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old." This is agreeable to the two ways unto life, revealed in the Scripture; the one by works, the other by grace, Rom. xi. 6. The one is called the law, the other grace, chap. vi. 14. The former is the law-covenant with the first Adam representing all his natural seed; made first in paradise, and afterward repeated on Mount Sinai, with the covenant of grace: the latter is the covenant of grace, made with the second Adam representing his spiritual seed: 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48. (2.) It is evident, that the salvation of sinners is by the blood of the covenant, which is the blood of Christ, Heb. x. 29; 1 Cor. xi. 25. And the Scripture mentions the blood of the covenant four times; but never the blood of the covenants: therefore the covenant, the blood whereof the Scripture mentions, and our salvation depends upon, is but one covenant, and not two. Now, that covenant is Christ's covenant, or the covenant of redemption: for it was through the blood of it he was brought again from the dead; namely, in virtue of the promise made therein to be fulfilled to him upon his performing the condition thereof, Heb. xiii. 20. And it is also his people's covenant, or the covenant of grace, Exod. xxiv. 8, "Behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you." It is expressly called their covenant, Zech. ix. 11, "As for thee also, by the blood of *thy* covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water." The words expressing the party here spoken to, being of the feminine gender in the first language, make it evident, that this is not directed to Christ, but to the church: so the covenant is proposed as their covenant. And the spiritual prisoners are delivered, in virtue of this their covenant, which certainly must

be the covenant of grace. By all which it appears, that the covenant of grace is the very same covenant that was made with Christ, in respect of whom it is called the covenant of redemption.

Inf. 2. Like as all mankind sinned in Adam, so believers obeyed and suffered in Christ the second Adam. For as the covenant of works being made with Adam as a public person and representative, all sinned in him, when he broke that covenant; so the covenant of grace being made with Christ, as a public person and representative, all believers obeyed and suffered in him, when he so fulfilled this covenant. This is the doctrine of the apostle, Rom. v. 19, "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners: so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Chap. viii. 3, "God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh;" ver. 4, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." 2 Cor. v. 21, "That we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Gal. ii. 20, "I am crucified with Christ." And it affords a solid answer for believers, unto the law's demand of obedience and suffering for life and salvation.

3. Believers are justified immediately, by the righteousness of Christ, without any righteousness of their own intervening; even as all men are condemned, upon Adam's sin, before they have done any good or evil in their own persons: Rom. v. 18, "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." And thus believers are righteous before God with the self same righteousness which was wrought by Jesus Christ, in his fulfilling the covenant. The which righteousness is not imputed to them in its effects only; so as their faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, are therefore accepted as their evangelical righteousness, on which they are justified: but it is imputed to them in itself, even as Adam's sin was.

4. The covenant of grace is absolute, and not conditional to us. For being made with Christ, as representative of his seed, all the conditions of it were laid on him, and fulfilled by him. Wherefore all that remains of it to be accomplished, is, the fulfilling of the promises unto him and his spiritual seed; even as it would have been in the case of the first covenant, if once the first Adam had fulfilled the condition thereof.

5. The covenant of grace is a contrivance of infinite wisdom and love, worthy to be embraced by poor sinners, as well ordered in all things and sure, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. O admirable contrivance of help for a desperate case! Wonderful contrivance of a covenant of God with them who were incapable of standing in the presence of his holi-

ness, or of performing the least condition for life and salvation! A new bargain for the relief of lost sinners made on the highest terms with those who were not able to come up to the lowest terms! Infinite wisdom found out the way, to wit, by a representative. The love of the Father engaged him to propose the representation; and the love of the Son engaged him to accept of it. Thus God had one, with whom he might contract with the safety of his honour; and who was able to fulfil the covenant, to the reparation of the injuries done to his glory: and sinners also had one able to act for them, and to purchase salvation for them at the hand of a holy just God. So a sure covenant was made, and a firm foundation laid, upon which God laid the weight of his honour, and on which sinners may safely lay their whole weight: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion a sure foundation: he that believeth, shall not make haste," Isa. xxviii. 16; "shall not be ashamed," Rom. ix. 33.

6. *Lastly*, The way to enter personally into the covenant of grace so as to partake of the benefits thereof, unto salvation, is, to unite with Christ the head of the covenant by faith. Being thus ingrafted into him, ye shall partake of all that happiness which is secured to Christ mystical, in the everlasting covenant: even as through your becoming children of Adam, by natural generation, ye are personally entered into the first covenant, so as to fall under that sin and death which passed upon all men, by the breach thereof, Rom. v. 12.

III. OF THE PARTY CONTRACTED AND UNDERTAKEN FOR.

As the party contractor and undertaker on man's side, in the covenant of grace, was a representative; so the party contracted and undertaken for, was represented by him. And that these two, namely, the represented, and those contracted for, are of equal latitude, is plain from the nature of the thing: for these whom one represents in a covenant, he contracts for in that covenant; and those for whom one contracts in a covenant made with him as representative, are represented by him in that covenant. Thus it was in the covenant of the first Adam, who was a figure of Christ the head of the second covenant. In it, those whom Adam contracted for, he represented; and those whom he represented, he contracted for: he represented his natural seed only, and for them alone he contracted: therefore those whom the second Adam contracted for, he represented; and whom he represented, he contracted for.

Now, the party represented and contracted for, by our Lord Jesus Christ, in the covenant of grace, was the elect of mankind; being a

certain number of mankind, chosen from eternity to everlasting life; "children partakers of flesh and blood, which God gave to Christ," Heb. ii. 13, 14. In their person he stood, making this covenant with his Father; in their name he acted, striking this bargain with him, as a surety to obey the law, and satisfy justice.

And this I shall, in the first place, confirm; and then shall inquire how the elect were considered in this covenant and federal representation.

First, That the elect were the party represented, or contracted and undertaken for, in the covenant of grace, appears from the following grounds.

1. The party with whom the covenant was made, is in the text called God's chosen; as representing and contracting for all the chosen or elect: even as the first man was called Adam or man, as representing and contracting for all mankind in his covenant. For, as the apostle teacheth, Heb. ii. 11, "He—and they—are all of one;" not only of one nature, but also of one body, to wit, the election; Christ is the head elect, Isa. xlii. 1, they the body elect, Eph. v. 23. Therefore they go under one name, principally belonging to him, and then to them by participation with him. Thus he is also called Abraham's seed, as representing all the spiritual seed of Abraham, that is, the elect, Gal. iii. 16, "And to thy seed which is Christ;" and the seed of the woman, as opposed to the serpent's seed; and under that name also the elect are comprehended; they, and they only, being the party betwixt whom and the serpent with his seed, God puts the enmity, according to the promise, Gen. iii. 15.

2. Those whom Christ represented and contracted for in the covenant of grace, are the heavenly men: 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48, "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." Now, the heavenly men, belonging to Christ the second man, are none other but the elect. For they are contra-distinguished to the earthy men, belonging to the first man; to wit, all mankind taken into the first covenant in Adam: and therefore they are the elect men, taken into the second covenant, in the second Adam. Again, the heavenly men are those who shall bear the image of the heavenly man Christ, ver. 49; and such are the elect, and they alone. And, finally, they are those to whom Christ is, in respect of efficacy, a quickening spirit: for "as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." As Adam's deadly efficacy goes as wide as his representation did in the first covenant, reaching all mankind his natural seed, and them only; so Christ's quickening efficacy goes as wide as his representa-

tion did in the second covenant, reaching all the elect, his spiritual seed, and them only: and if it did not, some would be deprived of the benefit which was purchased and paid for, by the surety, in their name: the which is not consistent with the justice of God.

3. They whom Christ represented and contracted for in the covenant, are his seed, his spiritual seed: Gal. iii. 16. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith—and to thy seed, which is Christ." Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4, "I have sworn unto David my servant. Thy seed will I establish for ever." In the covenants typical of the covenant of grace, the parties represented were the seed of the representatives they were made with, as was cleared before: and in the first Adam's covenant, his natural seed were the represented. Wherefore, in the second Adam's covenant, his spiritual seed are the represented. Now, Christ's spiritual seed are the elect, and none other; for they are those whom he begets with the word of truth, Jam. i. 18. and are born again (1 Pet. i. 23.) unto him in their regeneration; whom therefore he sees as his seed, with his own image on them, Isa. liii. 10. They are the travail of his soul, who, sooner or later, are, all of them, justified, ver. 11. They are the seed that shall serve him, Psalm xxii. 30; which shall be established and endure for ever, namely, in a state of happiness, Psalm lxxxix. 4, 29, 36.

4. *Lastly*, Christ was in the covenant of grace Israel-representative, according to that text, Isa. xlix. 3, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." Now, Israel the collective body, is the elect, Rom. ix. 6, "They are not all Israel which are of Israel:" therefore the elect were the party represented and contracted for in the covenant. So those whom Christ took with him into the bond of his covenant, are described to be the seed of Abraham: Heb. ii. 16, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham:" or rather as it is read in the margin of our Bibles, more agreeable to the original, "He taketh not hold of angels, but, of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold." The original word signifies, to take hold of a thing running away, or falling down; and in the same manner of construction, it is used of Christ's catching hold of Peter sinking in the water, Matth. xiv. 31. Fallen angels and men were both run away from God, and sinking in the sea of his wrath: and Christ with the bond of the covenant, takes hold of men; but not of the fallen angels; them he leaves to sink unto the bottom. All the seed of Adam was sinking, as well as the seed of Abraham, which is but a part of the seed of Adam, even some of all mankind: but Christ is not said to have taken hold of the seed of Adam, that is, all man-

kind; but of the seed of Abraham, that is, all the elect, or the spiritual Israel, called the house of Jacob, Luke i. 33. Accordingly it is observable, that the first time the covenant of grace was heard in the world, the discourse was directed to the serpent, by way of narration, Gen. iii. 14, 15; not to Adam, as the first covenant was, chap. ii. 16, 17, that Adam might know, he was to come in here as a private person only, and not as a public person with his seed. And for this cause also, our Lord Jesus is not simply called Adam, or man; but the last Adam, and the second man, whose seed differs from that of the first man, as Abraham's seed from Adam's seed: but he is simply called Israel, without any epithet at all: and his seed is plainly determined to be the elect, Isa. xlv. 25, "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified;" even as in the first man all the seed of Adam was condemned, Rom. v. 18. For as the first man was simply called Adam or man, because, in the first covenant, he was a compend of all mankind; he was all men in law-reckoning, they being all represented by him: so Jesus Christ was a compend of all Israel, that is, all the elect; he was all Israel in law-reckoning, they being all represented by him. And thus we have the true ground of the universality of that expression, Isa. liii. 6. "The Lord, hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;" *i. e.* of all Israel that is to say, all the elect. The which is confirmed by a parallel text, bearing the type, whereof this hath the antitype, viz. Lev. xvi. 21, "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live-goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat." For as Israel was a people entertained with types, so they themselves were indeed a typical people.

Secondly, We are to inquire, how the elect were considered in this covenant and federal representation. And therein they came under a threefold consideration.

1. They were considered as sinners, lost, ruined, and undone in Adam; lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matt. xv. 24. In the first covenant, the whole flock of mankind was put under the hand of one shepherd, to wit, Adam; but he, losing himself, lost all the flock, and was never able to recover so much as one of them again. God had, from all eternity, put a secret mark on some of them, whereby he distinguished them from the rest, 2 Tim. ii. 19, "Having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." And them also he saw among others, gone away from their pasture, wandering as waifs and strays, a prey to every devourer: but, in order to their being sought out, and returned, and kept in safety for ever, the new covenant was entered into with another shepherd, even our

Lord Jesus Christ: and they are put under his hand, as the shepherd of Israel. In Adam's representation in the covenant of works, the party represented was considered as an upright seed, Eccl. vii. 29: but in Christ's representation in the covenant of grace, the party represented was considered as a corrupt sinful mass, laden with guilt, under the wrath of God and curse of the law. And who would have represented such a company, putting himself in their room and stead? But free love engaged our Lord Jesus to it. So the holy one of God represented wretched sinners; the beloved of the Father represented the cursed company.

2. They were considered also as utterly unable to help themselves, in whole or in part; as being without strength, Rom. v. 6. They were debtors, but quite unable to pay off one farthing of the debt: they were criminals, but quite unable to bear their own punishment, to the satisfaction of justice: had it lain on them to have paid the debt, or borne the punishment, they behoved to have sunk under the load for ever. So it was necessary they should have one to represent them, taking the burden upon him for them all.

3. *Lastly*, They were considered withal as the objects of eternal, sovereign, and free love, given to Christ by his Father. The Father loved them, John xvii. 23, and therefore gave them to Christ, ver. 6. The Son loved them, Eph. v. 2; and accepting of the gift, represented them in the covenant, as a father his own children, Isa. ix. 6, "His name shall be called—The everlasting Father." Compare Heb. ii. 13, "Behold, I, and the children which God hath given me." It was owing to this free love, and mere good pleasure, that they, and not others in the same condemnation, by the breach of the first covenant, were represented and contracted for by Jesus Christ, in the second; that their names were put in the eternal contract, while the names of others were left out. They were his Father's choice, and his own choice; so he became their representative.

From what is said concerning the party represented and contracted for, we make the following inferences.

Inf. 1. There is a sovereign freedom of the love of God appearing in the second covenant, the covenant of grace. And it appears especially in two things, (1.) In that there was a love towards fallen man, and not towards fallen angels, Tit. iii. 4, whereby it came to pass, that men, and not devils, were taken hold of, represented, and contracted for, by Jesus Christ, in the covenant, Heb. ii. 16. Doubtless he could have contracted for the one, as well as for the other: but sovereignty passed by fallen angels, and caught hold of men; howbeit the former were, in their own nature, the more worthy and excellent creatures. But in all the dispensation of grace, there is

no respect to creature-worth; all is owing to the mere good pleasure of God, who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. (2.) It appears in that there was an electing love of men; whereby it came to pass, that some men, and not all men, were represented and contracted for in the covenant. All men were alike by nature; and there was nothing in one more than in another, to recommend him: but free love pitched on objects altogether unlovely; and sovereign love pitches on some such objects, passing by others of the same condition: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight," Matth. xi. 26. The vessels of honour and the vessels of dishonour, are both made of the same sinful lump: a mystery that must be resolved into sovereign will and pleasure, Rom. ix. 21, "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" But say not, that this disparageth the federal representation of the second Adam, that he represented only some of mankind, whereas the first Adam represented all mankind. For as it is more to be surety for a vast sum, for one man who neither hath, nor can give any thing at all wherewithal to pay his debt, than to be surety for a hundred such as have abundance of their own; so it was more for Jesus Christ to contract and undertake for one sinner, than for Adam to contract for a righteous world. And still it holds true, that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, Rom. v. 20, for it is more by far to save one than to ruin many. Meanwhile those represented by Christ in the second covenant, are "a great multitude, which no man could number," Rev. vii. 9, even as "the stars of heaven," Gen. xv. 5. Rom. iv. 18.

Inf. 2. There is no universal redemption, nor universal atonement. Jesus Christ died not for all and every individual person of mankind; but for the elect only. The contrary doctrine may consist with the opinion which holds the covenant of redemption, and the covenant of grace, to be two distinct covenants; the former made with Christ, and the latter with believers; the condition of the one undertaken and performed by him, the condition of the other undertaken and performed by us. Accordingly that opinion concerning the covenant, is readily embraced by Universalists of different denominations. But that doctrine is utterly inconsistent with this account of the covenant, which doth at once overthrow universal redemption or atonement, together with the federal conditionality of our holiness and good works, in the covenant of grace. For if the covenant of grace was made with Christ as a representative, and the elect only were the party represented by him in it; then surely the conditions of the covenant, his doing and dying,

were accomplished for them only; and he died for no other: as when one hath entered into a bond of suretyship, his payment of that bond can never be reckoned a payment of their debt, whose names were not in the bond, and whom he was not surety for.

Inf. 3. and *last*, Whoever they be that reject the covenant of grace offered to them in the gospel, and so perish; all God's elect shall infallibly be entered personally into it, and be saved. Like as all those whom Adam represented in the covenant of works, have been, are, or shall be brought personally into that covenant, and sin and death pass upon them, Rom. v. 12; even so all those whom Christ represented in the covenant of grace, have been, are, or shall be brought personally into this covenant, and partake of righteousness and life, vers. 18, 19. Our Lord Jesus has fulfilled the conditions of the covenant for them whom he represented; and it would neither be suitable to the justice of God, nor to the wisdom of Christ the party contracting with him, that he should represent, contract, and fulfil the conditions, for any who shall never enjoy the benefit of the contract. Wherefore, since there are who, by a purpose of God that cannot be frustrated, shall, without peradventure, be brought personally into this covenant; and ye who hear the gospel, having the means for compassing that end used towards you, do stand as fair for it as any; this may encourage you to come to Christ, and take hold of the covenant. Bestir yourselves therefore, O sinners, to take hold of the covenant of grace, which is offered to you in the gospel; and come ye to Christ by faith, thereby winding yourselves personally into the bond of this covenant, and the communion thereof.

Objection. "But I fear I am none of those whom Christ represented in the covenant of grace; how then can I take hold of it by believing?" Answer. Though your name were the first name that the Lamb wrote down in his book of life; yet you nor no man can know, that it is there at all until that you have by believing taken hold of the covenant. 2 Pet. i. 10, "Make your calling and election sure;" but first your calling, and then your election. And, on the other hand, though you were a monster of all manner of wickedness, and had all the desperate marks of a castaway about you, except that one only, the sin against the Holy Ghost, you nor no man can know that you were not represented in the covenant: Matt. xii. 31. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." Wherefore that matter is an absolute secret to you, which, in this case, you are not to meddle to determine in: for "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are

revealed, belong unto us," Deut. xxix. 29. Neither does your warrant to believe and to lay hold on the covenant, any manner of way depend on it: for the reprobate have as good and fair a revealed warrant to believe and take hold of the covenant of grace as the elect have, else they could not be condemned for unbelief, and not taking hold of the covenant. Be what you will, since you are certainly a sinner of mankind, your warrant is uncontestable, according to the word: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John iii. 23. Wherefore believe ye, and take hold of the covenant for yourselves; so shall ye know your election, and your representation in the covenant, by the effects thereof.

This difficulty cast in the way of a sinner sensible of his need of Christ, to beat him off from believing on Christ, is a dangerous device and temptation of the devil. But do you repel it, saying, O enemy of my salvation, it is true, I do not know whether Christ represented me or not, in the eternal covenant; neither am I obliged nor concerned to know it, in order to my taking hold of that covenant: but one thing I know assuredly, namely, that the covenant, in the free promise of life and salvation, upon the ground of Christ's obedience and death allenarly, is held out to me, even to me, to be believed, trusted to, and rested upon, by me, even by me; and therefore I will believe, and lay hold on it; and, upon the infallible ground of the faithfulness of God in the promise, "Whosoever believeth, shall not perish, but have everlasting life," I will assuredly conclude, that it shall be made out to me.

Question. But are there no marks or signs whereby a poor sinner may know himself to be one of those who were represented by Christ in the second covenant, and whose names he put in the bond of suretiship that he gave to his Father from eternity? Answer. Yea, there are: but then they are such, as although the having of them will prove a man to have been represented by Jesus Christ in the eternal covenant; yet the want of them will not prove a man not to have been represented therein, forasmuch as what one has not now, he may come to have afterwards. And, under this limitation, I offer these two marks of the thing in question.

Mark 1. A deliberate and cordial complacency in the covenant. As it was with the representative from eternity; so it is in time, in that matter, with the represented, when once by grace they become capable of personal consenting: there is a deliberate and cordial complacency in the covenant being proposed, Psalm xl. 7, "Then

said I," ver. 8, "thy law is within my heart." The children of men discover themselves to be Adam's natural seed, represented by him in the covenant of works, by the inclination and bent of their hearts towards that covenant. There is such a bias to that covenant hung upon the minds of men naturally, that do and live, or work and win, is the religion of all natural men, so far as they have any practical religion at all: and they cannot be brought off from it but by the power of renewing grace. Even so the elect of God discover themselves to be Christ's spiritual seed, represented by him in the covenant of grace, by their deliberate and cordial complacency in this covenant. The heart touched with divine grace says of it, "This is all my salvation, and all my desire," 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The new bias hung on their minds by renewing grace, carries them to a hearty approbation, relish and liking of the new covenant held forth in the gospel; they are well pleased with the parties-contractors, the representative and representation in it; the conditions and promises of it; the administrator, the administration, and order thereof. In a word, the covenant is in their eyes a faultless contrivance; there is nothing in it they would have out, and there is nothing out of it they would have in. So there they cast anchor for their own souls. But it is not so with others: 1 Pet. ii. 7, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner;" ver. 8, "and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.

Mark 2. The image of Christ begun to be drawn on the soul, together with a longing for the perfecting thereof; 1 Cor. xv. 48. "As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." Ver. 49, "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." Like as all whom Adam represented, when he entered into the covenant of works in paradise, do afterwards, every one in his time, personate Adam, looking as like him as ever child was like a father, acting even as he acted, as I shewed elsewhere: so all whom Christ represented in the covenant of grace from eternity, do in time put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27, personating him, and representing him in another sense, namely, bearing his image, and "walking even as he walked," 1 John ii. 6. It is a promise of the covenant to our Lord Jesus, Isa. liii. 10, "He shall see his seed," to wit, as one sees a new-born babe. But do not others so see them too? Yea, indeed they do. Satan and wicked men see them, as rebels and traitors do with grudge and hatred see

a new-born prince heir to the crown. The godly see them, as in that case the princesses do with a particular satisfaction see their new-born brother. But our Lord Jesus Christ himself sees them, as the king, the father of the babe, does with a peculiar satisfaction see him as his own son, and his own picture. Meanwhile, as Adam's children do not open out all at once what of old Adam is in them, but by degrees as they grow up; but they are still longing for the perfection thereof, when they shall be grown men, so Christ's children are but imperfect in this life as in the state of childhood; but they are longing to arrive at "perfection, at the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, the principle of which they have in them, Eph. iv. 13.

Thus far of the first head, the parties in the covenant of grace.

HEAD II.

THE MAKING OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

HAVING considered the parties in the covenant of grace, we come now to take a view of the making of that covenant betwixt the parties contracting therein. And here we find ourselves at the fountain-head of the salvation of lost sinners, the origin and rise of the glorious plan, laid from eternity in the secret council of the ever-blessed Trinity, for remedy of man's misery. And this is a manifold mystery, the several folds of which we are not able fully to discover. With God it was all one piece, if I may so phrase it; for with all things are together and at once; and not one thing before, and another after, as with us. Howbeit, we cannot conceive of it but in parcels; first one piece of the mystery and then another; and that because of the weakness of our capacity, as we are creatures; and much more, as we are creatures under much spiritual darkness. Wherefore we must of necessity address ourselves to the consideration of it in parcels; but still remembering, we are in the eternal mystery, transacted in the eternal decree of the holy Trinity all at once, by one eternal act of the divine will; in which, nevertheless, we are allowed to conceive a certain order, since otherwise we cannot take up the mystery.

We have already seen, that the Father, the party-contractor on Heaven's side, is in that matter to be considered as an offended God; but purposing to manifest the glory of his mercy in the salvation of

some of mankind lost; yet withal as a just God, who cannot but give sin a just recompense: and also, that Jesus Christ, the party-contractor on man's side, is to be considered therein as the last or second Adam, representative of a seed. Wherefore, first of all, we are to inquire, How Christ the Son of God became second Adam? and then, How the covenant was made with him as such? the former being as it were preliminary to the latter.

First, How Christ the Son of God became second Adam? This we may take up in two things.

1. The Father willed and designed, that his own Son, the eternal Word, should, for the purpose of mercy towards mankind lost, take on their nature, and become man. He saw that sacrifice and offering would not answer the case; the debt was greater than to be paid at that rate; the redemption of souls could not be managed but by a person of infinite dignity: wherefore, having purposed that the darling attribute of mercy should be illustrated in the case of lost mankind, he willed the human nature to be united in time to the divine nature, in the person of the Son.

And hereunto the Son, as the eternal Word, the second person of the glorious Trinity, having no nearer relation to man than as his sovereign Lord Creator, readily agreed: Heb. x. 5, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me."—Ver. 7, "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." The eternal Word consented to be made flesh, that all flesh might not perish: he consented to become man, to take unto a personal union with himself a human nature, to wit, a true body and a reasonable soul, according to the eternal destination of his Father. This was an instance of amazing condescension. The highest monarch's consent to lay aside his robes of majesty, to clothe himself with rags, and become a beggar, is not to be compared with it. Nay the highest angel's consent to become a worm, is not to be named in one day with the eternal Son of God, the Father's equal, his consenting to become man: for the distance between the divine nature and the human is infinite; whereas the distance between the angelic nature, and the nature of worms of the earth, is but finite.

Now, the effect of this was, that hereby the Son of God was constituted substantial Mediator, or Mediator in respect of nature, between God and man. Being from eternity God equal with the Father, he so stood related to heaven: and having from eternity consented to become man, he so stood related to earth: for though he did not actually take on him the nature of man until the fulness of time appointed by the Father; yet,

forasmuch as he had from eternity consented to take it on, and it was impossible that his consent should miss to take effect, he was recokened in law, to all intents and purposes thereof, as if he had actually been incarnate. A type of this his substantial mediation was Jacob's ladder, which was "set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven," Gen. xxviii. 12. A clear emblem of the divine and human nature in Christ, through whom, as substantial Mediator, there was a way opened towards a communication for peace between heaven and earth. Accordingly our Lord Jesus applies it to himself: John i. 51, "Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the "angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man;" to wit, as on Jacob's ladder, Gen. xxviii. 12.

2. The Father chose him to be head of the election; to be the last Adam, federal head and representative of such as sovereign pleasure should pitch upon to be vessels of mercy, and inrolled in the book of life; a head and representative with whom he might make the new covenant for life and salvation to them.

And to this also he readily agreed, consenting to be the last or second Adam, head and representative of the election; to sustain their persons, and transact in their name: Isa. xliii. 1, "Behold—mine elect in whom my soul delighteth." Psalm lxxxx. 19, "I have exalted one chosen out of the people." 1 Cor. xv. 47, "The second man is the Lord from heaven." The breach between God and man was greater than to be done away by a mere intermessenger, who travelling between parties at variance, reconciles them with bare words. There could be no covenant of peace betwixt God and sinners without reparation of damages done to the honour of God through sin, and without honouring of the holy law by an exact obedience: but these things being quite beyond their reach, Christ the Son of God saith, "Lo, I come; I am content to take their place, and put myself in their room as a second Adam."

Now, the effect of this was, that hereby he was constituted last Adam, or the second man, 1 Cor. xv. 47; and official Mediator, or Mediator in respect of office, between God and man, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all." Being called of his Father unto that office, and having embraced the call thereto, he was invested with the office, and treated with as such, before the world began, Tit. i. 2. And indeed he, and he only, was fit for it. The two families of heaven and earth being at war, there could be no peace between them but through a Mediator. But where could a mediator be found to interpose between such parties, who would not either have been too high, or else too low, in respect

of one of the parties at variance? Man or angels would have been too low, in respect of God; and an unveiled God would have been too high, in respect of sinful men, unable to bear intercourse with such heavenly majesty. Wherefore the Son of God, that he might be fit to mediate; as he being God equal with the Father, was high enough in respect of the party offended; so he consented to become low enough in respect of the party offending, by his becoming man.

Secondly, It is to be inquired, How the covenant was made with Christ as second Adam? And this also may be taken up in two things.

1. The Father designed a certain number of lost mankind, as it were by name, to be the constituent members of that body chosen to life, of which body Christ was the designed head; and he gave them to him for that end: Phil. iv. 3, "My fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life." John xvii. 6, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." These were a chosen company, whom sovereign free grace picked out from among the rest of mankind, on a purpose of love, and gave to the second Adam for a seed; on which account they are said to have been chosen in him, Eph. i. 4; being in the decree of election laid upon him as the foundation-stone, to be built upon him, and obtain salvation by him, 1 Thess. v. 9; which decree, as it relates to the members elect, is therefore called the book of life; being as it were the roll which the Father gave to the second Adam, the head-elect, containing the names of those designed to be his seed, to receive life by him.

Now, our Lord Jesus standing as second Adam, head of the election, to wit, such as sovereign pleasure should pitch upon to be vessels of mercy, did accept of the gift of the particular persons elected or chosen by his Father: John xvii. 6, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me." Ver. 10, "And thine are mine." Like as the first Adam, in the making of the first covenant, stood alone without actual issue, yet had destinated for him a numerous issue, to be comprehended with him in that covenant, to wit, all mankind; the which Adam did at least virtually accept: so a certain number of lost mankind being elected to life, God, as their original proprietor, gave them to Christ the appointed head, to be his members, and comprehended with him in the second covenant, though as yet none of them were in being; and he accepted of the gift of them, being well-pleased to take them in particular for his body mystical, for which he should covenant with his Father. And, in token thereof, he as it were received and kept as his own the book of life containing their names, which is therefore called the Lamb's book of life, Rev. xxi. 27.

2. The Father proposed to him as second Adam, the new covenant for life and salvation to them, in the full tenor, promises, and condition thereof; treating in him with all those particular persons of lost mankind elected unto life, and given to him, even as he treated with all mankind in Adam in the first covenant. The promises therein proposed, were indeed great and glorious; but withal the condition, or terms, on which they were proposed, were exceeding high.

Howbeit, as the first Adam, standing as head and representative of all his natural seed, entered into the first covenant with God, accepting the promise thereof, upon the terms and condition therein proposed, which he engaged to fulfil; so our Lord Jesus standing as second Adam, head and representative of the particular persons of lost mankind, by name elected to life, and given to him as his spiritual seed, entered into the second covenant with his Father; accepting the promises thereof, upon the terms and condition therein proposed; consenting and engaging to fulfil the same, for them. And thus the covenant of grace was made, and concluded, betwixt the Father and Christ the second Adam, from all eternity; being the second covenant, in respect of order and manifestation to the world, though it was first in being: 1 Cor. xv. 47, "The second man is the Lord from heaven." Isa. liii. 10, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed." Tit. i. 2, "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Psalm xl. 6, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened"—7, "Then said I, Lo, I come" —8, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

Now, Christ the second Adam, giving this consent, took upon him a threefold character, of unparallelled weight and importance; sisting himself, (1.) The Kinsman-redeemer in the covenant, (2.) The Surety of the covenant, and, (3.) The Priest of the covenant. The mediation of Christ doth indeed run through the whole of the covenant. And there are several other parts of that mediation, which respecting the promises of the covenant, do belong to the administration thereof. But these I have now mentioned, do respect the condition of the covenant, and so belong to the making thereof; under which head we shall consider them in order.

I. CHRIST THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER IN THE COVENANT.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam, giving his consent to the covenant, as proposed to him by the Father, sisted himself Kinsman-

redeemer in the covenant: Job xix. 25, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."

Under the law, when a man was not able to act for himself, to assert and use his own right, one that was akin to him, had a right to act for him, coming in his room, and standing up in his right. And such a one was called his Goel; which properly signifies a Kinsman-redeemer. Hence that word is sometimes rendered a kinsman; as Numb. v. 8, "If the man have no (Goel) kinsman to recompense the trespass unto." Ruth iii. 12, "I am thy (Goel) near kinsman: howbeit there is a (Goel) kinsman nearer than I." Sometimes it is rendered a Redeemer; as Prov. xxiii. 11, "Their (Goel) Redeemer is mighty." Isa. xlvii. 4, "As for our (Goel) Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name." One's acting in that capacity, is called doing the kinsman's part, or redeeming, to wit, by right of kin, Ruth iii. 13; and iv. 6. Howbeit, such a one might refuse to do the kinsman's part; as Ruth's kinsman-redeemer did, who resigned his right to Boaz, and in token thereof drew off his own shoe, and gave it him, Ruth iv. 6, 7, 8.

Now, Christ the second Adam saw sinners, his ruined kinsmen quite unable to act for themselves. Not one of them all was able to redeem himself, and far less his brother. Withal, the angels, near akin to them in the rational world, durst not meddle with the redemption; being sure they could not have missed to mar their own inheritance thereby, nor have delivered their poor kinsmen neither. If he should have declined it, and drawn off his shoe to them, or to any other of the whole creation, there was none who durst have ventured to receive it, or his foot in it. "I looked," saith he, "and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation," Isa. lxiii. 5. He took on himself the character of their Kinsman-redeemer; and of him as such Job speaks in the forecited passage, which I conceive to be thus expressed in the original: "I know, my Kinsman-redeemer liveth: and the latter one he shall stand up upon the dust." In which words Job comforts himself with a view of Christ as his Kinsman-redeemer living, even in his day, in respect of his divine nature; and as the latter or second one, (in opposition to the former or first, Exod. iv. 8, 9; Deut. xxiv. 3, 4.) namely, the latter or second Adam Redeemer, in opposition to the former or first Adam destroyer; firmly believing, that the one uniting to himself a human nature, should as sure stand up upon the dust of the earth, and do the kinsman's part for him; as the other, having the breath of life breathed into his nostrils, stood up upon it, and ruined all.

Now, there were four things the kinsman- redeemer was to do for his kinsman, unable to act for himself; all which Christ the second Adam undertook in the covenant.

1. He was to marry the widow of his deceased kinsman, to raise up seed to his brother. Hereof Boaz was put in mind by Ruth, chap. iii. 9, "I am Ruth thine handmaid; spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid, for thou art a near kinsman." Compare ver. 10—13; chap. iv. 10; and Ezek. xvi. 8. I spread my skirt over thee—and thou becamest mine." Our nature was in a comfortable and fruitful condition, while the image of God impressed thereupon in Adam, remained with it; but that image being removed, in the spiritual death caused by his sin, there ensued an absolute barrenness, as to the fruits of holiness, in our nature thus left. But our Kinsman-redeemer consented to marry the widow. Being to take to himself a human nature he undertook to take on our human nature in particular, taking his flesh of Adam's family. Thus was it provided, that his body should not be made of nothing, nor of any thing whatsoever that was not derived from Adam as its original. It was a low match indeed for him; and would have been so, even if the family of Adam had been in its primitive state and splendour: but now it was considered as in the depth of poverty and disgrace. Yet, being necessary for our redemption, he consented thereto, as our Kinsman-redeemer. Accordingly, in the fulness of time, he was made of a woman, a daughter of Adam's family, Gal. iv. 4, and so was a son of Adam, Luke iii. 23—38. Thus was a foundation laid for the mystical marriage of believers with him; which mystical marriage doth not belong to the condition and making of the covenant properly so called, but to the promise and administration of it, being a sinner's personal entrance thereinto. And the great end, in subordination to the glory of God, for which this more intimate union and match with our nature was gone into by our Kinsman-redeemer, was to render it again fruitful in the fruits of true holiness: and without it our nature had for ever remained under absolute barrenness in that point, even as the nature of fallen angels doth.

2. He was to redeem the mortgaged inheritance of his poor kinsman, Lev. xxv. 25, "If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold;" or rather, "then shall come in his kinsman-redeemer, that is near unto him; and he shall redeem that which his brother sold." Our father Adam waxing poor through the deceitful dealing of the tempter with him, quite sold away the inheritance of eternal life for a mor-

sel of forbidden fruit: and his children waxing poorer still, through their own personal fault, had set themselves farther and farther from it. They could not have raised amongst them all, what would have redeemed so much as one man's part of it. Howbeit, except it was redeemed, they could never have had access to it. Wherefore the second Adam, as Kinsman-redeemer, took the burden of the redemption on himself, and agreed to pay the price of that purchase; "dying for us, that we might live together with him," 1 Thess. v. 10.

3. He was to ransom his poor kinsman in bondage, paying the price of his redemption: Lev. xxv. 47, "If thy brother wax poor, and sell himself," ver. 48, "After that he is sold, he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him." Ver. 52, "According unto his years shall he give him again the price of his redemption." Being sold in the loins of our first father, we were brought into bondage under the curse of the law. So we are by nature the law's bond-men, and consequently slaves to sin and Satan, never to have been released without a ransom, the full worth of so many souls. This ransom was stated in the covenant; to wit, that the Kinsman-redeemer should give himself a ransom for his poor kinsmen: and he agreed to it, for purchasing their liberty, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. The ransom was great, soul for soul, body for body; a person of infinite dignity for his poor kinsmen in bondage. But he consented to take on him the form of a servant, that he might be set free; to have his ear bored at the law's door-post, that they might be delivered out of their bondage.

4. *Lastly*, He was to avenge the blood of his slain kinsman on the slayer: Deut. xix. 12, "The elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the (Goel) avenger of blood, that he may die." Our Kinsman-redeemer saw all his poor kindred slain men. And the devil was the murderer, John viii. 44. He had ministered poison to them in the loins of their first parent; yea, he had smitten them to death, killed them with an arrow shot through the eye. But no avenger of their blood could be found, till the second Adam, as their Kinsman-redeemer, did, in the second covenant undertake the avenging of it. Meanwhile, the murderer had the power of death, Heb. ii. 14; and "the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law," 1 Cor. xv. 56. Wherefore there was no disarming and destroying of the murderer, without taking the sting out of death which he had the power of. And that was not to be done, but by removing the guilt of sin, whereby sinners were bound over to death: neither was this to be done, but by satisfying the law, whose awful sanction of death strongly kept fast

the guilt of death on the sinners. These were the iron gates to be broke through, ere the Kinsman-redeemer, the avenger of blood, could get at the murderer. But the mighty Redeemer undertook, by his own death and sufferings, to satisfy the law; and by that means to remove the strength of sin; and by this means again, to take away the sting of death: and so by his own death to destroy the murderer that had the power of death; and thus to avenge the blood of his slain kinsman upon him, Heb. ii. 14. So did Samson, a type of our Kinsman-Redeemer, avenge Israel of the Philistines their oppressors, pulling down the house on the Philistines, and dying himself to destroy them, Judg. xvi.

II. CHRIST THE SURETY OF THE COVENANT.

Christ the second Adam consenting to the covenant, sisted himself also surety of it: Heb. vii. 22, "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament;" or rather, as others read it, of a better covenant. A surety is one who undertakes for another, obliging himself whether for paying his debt, civil or criminal, or for his performing a deed. That we may then rightly understand Christ's suretiship, it is necessary we consider, 1. For whom, 2. For what he became surety in the covenant.

First, For whom Christ became surety in the covenant. I find two things advanced on this head, namely, (1.) That he became surety for God to sinners; and (2.) Surety for sinners to God. To the first of these, the Socinians restrain Christ's suretiship, denying the second; and so overthrow the foundation of our salvation. But all orthodox divines agree, in that the second of these is the main thing in it. Some of them indeed make no difficulty of admitting, that Christ became surety for God to sinners, as well as surety for sinners to God, undertaking, on God's part, that all the promises shall be made good to the seed, even to all that believe. There is no question, but God's promises are, in respect of his infallible truth and veracity, most firm and sure in themselves, and cannot miss to be performed: but we being guilty creatures, are slow of heart to believe; and therefore do need what may make them more sure to us, or assure our hearts they shall be performed to us. And for this cause he hath given us his word of promise under his hand in the holy scriptures, and an earnest of the promised inheritance, Eph. i. 14; the seal of the Spirit, ver. 13; 2 Cor. i. 22: the sacramental seals, Rom. iv. 11; yea, and his solemn oath too, in the matter, to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, Heb. vi. 17. And if Jesus Christ is surety for God to us, it is no doubt for the same end.

But I doubt if the holy scripture calls Christ a surety in that sense at all. In the forecited passage, Heb. vii. 22, the only text wherein Christ is expressly called a surety, it is evident, that his suretiship therein mentioned, respects his priestly office, wherein he deals with God for us; ver. 20, "And in as much as not without an oath he was made priest," 21. (—"by him that said unto him, The Lord sware, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec)" ver. 22, "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament." But his suretiship for God to us, cannot relate to his priestly office, but to his kingly office, in respect of which all power is given to him in heaven and in earth; and consequently a power to see that all the promises be performed to his people. And therefore his suretiship mentioned in that text, is for us to God, and not for God to us. It is but in other two texts only, as far as I have observed, that we read of suretiship relative to the case between God and a sinner: and in both of them, the suretiship is not to the sinner, but for him. They are Psalm cxix. 122, "Be surety for thy servant for good;" and Job xvii. 3. "Put me in a surety with thee." The original phraseology or expression, is the same in the latter text as in the former; and the same in them both, as in the case of Judah's suretiship for Benjamin, to his father, Gen. xliii. 9; and xliv. 32. Now, unless the sacred oracles go before us, in proposing Christ as a surety for God to us, I see no reason, why the being of such a thing at all should be yielded to the adversaries, who make such a pernicious use of it. As for the comfort that might arise from it to us, the same is fully secured, in that the whole administration of the covenant is committed into the hand of our Lord Jesus Christ; and he is the Trustee and Testator of the covenant or covenant-benefits; as shall be shown in due place.

But, without all peradventure, Christ the Mediator and second Adam, being surety in the covenant, for sinners to God; as the scriptures do abundantly declare: Psalm lxxxix. 19, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty." 1 Tim. ii. 5, "One Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" ver. 6, "Who gave himself a ransom for all." 2 Cor. v. 21, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin." Isa. liii. 6, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Gal. iii. 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." Isa. liii. 5, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." The covenant of grace was made with the spiritual seed in Christ the second Adam, taking burden for them upon himself as their surety. And without a surety it could not have

been made with them. For they were a company of broken men, owing a thousand times more than they were all worth: and their word in a new bargain for life and salvation was worth nothing; there could be no regard had to it in heaven. There was neither truth nor ability left them after the first covenant was broken. Behold their character in point of truth or veracity, Rom. iii. 4, "Let God be true, but every man a liar:" and in point of ability, chap. v. 6, "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." The demands in this covenant were high, and quite above their ability to answer: and, besides, they themselves were false and fickle. They brake their word in the first covenant when able to have kept it; how could they be trusted in this new bargain, when their ability was gone? So there was an absolute necessity of a surety for them in it. And Jesus Christ became surety for them; so the new covenant, on which depends all their salvation, was made, and made sure.

Solomon tells us, That "he that is surety for a stranger, shall smart for it: and he that hateth suretiship, is sure," Prov. xi. 15. Our Lord Jesus knew very well, the burden he took on himself in his suretiship for sinners; the character of those whom he became surety for; and that he could have no relief from them; but his love to his Father's glory, and the salvation of sinners, engaged him in it, being perfectly sure to smart for it, as will appear from considering,

Secondly, For what he became surety in the covenant. Suretiship, in respect of the subject-matter of it, is of two sorts. 1. There is a suretiship for paying one's debt: Prov. xxii. 26, "Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts." 2. A suretiship for one's performing of a deed: chap. xx. 16, "Take his garment that is surety for a stranger; and take a pledge of him for a strange woman;" that is of him who is surety for her good behaviour; for she will leave them in the lurch.

Now, our Lord's suretiship for sinners was of the first sort. Christ as the second Adam consenting to the covenant, sisted himself surety for the debt of the seed represented by him. Their debt was by God's eternal fore-knowledge, stated from the broken covenant of works, in the whole latitude of the demands it had on them; and he became surety for it, striking hands with his Father to pay it completely, And,

1. He became surety for their debt of punishment, which they as sinners were liable in payment of, as the original phraseth it, 2 Thess. i. 9. That was the debt owing to the divine justice, for all and every one of their sins, original or actual. The demerit of their sins, as offences against an infinite God, was an infinite punishment.

They were liable to bear the pains of death, in the full latitude thereof; to suffer the force of revenging wrath, to the complete satisfaction of infinite justice, and full reparation of God's injured honour. This was their debt of punishment: a debt which they themselves could never have cleared, though paying to the utmost of their power, through the ages of eternity. But this their debt Christ became surety for, obliging himself to lay down his life for theirs which was lost in law: Psalm xl. 6, 7, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened—Then said I Lo, I come." John x. 15, "I lay down my life for the sheep." Ver. 18, "I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Here is a suretiship that never had a match! David in a transport of grief for the death of his son Absalom, wishes he had died for him 2 Sam. xviii. 33; Reuben will venture the life of his two sons for Benjamin, Gen. xlii. 37; and Judah will venture his own for him, chap. xliii. 9, while yet there was hope that all would be safe: but our Lord Jesus deliberately pledgeth his own life for sinners, when it was beyond all peradventure, the precious pledge would be lost in the cause, and that the death he would suffer, would be a thousand deaths in one. Some have offered themselves sureties in capital causes, and embraced death, for their country or friends: and "peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, (and enemies), Christ died for us," Rom. v. 7, 8, 10.

Now, in the second Adam's suretiship for the criminal debt of his spiritual seed, there was not an ensuring of the payment thereof one way or other, only; as in a simple cautionary: but there was an exchange of persons in law; Christ substituting himself in their room and taking the whole obligation on himself. This the free grace of God the creditor did admit, when he might have insisted, that the soul that sinned should die: and, a delay being withal granted as to the time of the payment, God thus manifested his forbearance, celebrated by the apostle, Rom. iii. 25. And, in virtue of that substitution, Christ became debtor in law, bound to pay that debt which he contracted not; to restore that which he took not away, Psalm lxix. 4. For, becoming surety for them, to the end there might be laid a foundation, in law and justice, for exacting their debt of punishment from him, there guilt was transferred on him, Isa. liii. 6. "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all." This was pointed at, in the laying of the hand on the head of the sacrifices under the law, especially on the head of the scape-goat, Lev. xvi. 21. "And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of

the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat." All the sins of all the elect were at once imputed to the surety, and so became his, as his righteousness becomes ours, namely, in law-reckoning, 2 Cor. v. 21. "For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And he himself speaks so of them, Psalm xl. 12. "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me;" as several valuable interpreters do understand it, according as the apostle gives us direction, determining Christ himself to be the speaker in this Psalm, Heb. x. 5, 6, 7. He was indeed without sin inherent in him; but not without sin imputed to him, till in his resurrection he got up his discharge, having cleared the debt by his death and sufferings. Then was he justified in the Spirit, 1 Tim. iii. 16, and so shall appear the second time, without sin, Heb. ix. 28; the sin which was upon him, by imputation, the first time he appeared, being done away at his resurrection. This relation of our sin to Christ, is necessary from the nature of suretiship for debt; in which case, no body doubts but the debt becomes the surety's, when once he hath stricken hands for it. And how else could the law have justly proceeded against Christ? How could our punishment have been, in justice, inflicted on him, if he had not had such a relation to our sin? If the law could not charge our sin on him, in virtue of his own voluntary undertaking, it could have no ground in justice to inflict our punishment on him.

2. He became surety for their debt of duty or obedience; the which also is a debt according to the style of the holy scripture, Gal. v. 3, "A debter to do the whole law." The law as a covenant of works, though it was broken by them, and they had incurred the penalty thereof, yet neither lost its right, nor ceased to exact of them the obedience which at first it required of man, as the condition of life. They were still bound to perfect obedience, and on no lower terms could have eternal life, as our Lord taught the lawyer for his humiliation, Luke x. 28, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." The paying of the debt of punishment might satisfy as to the penalty of the bond; but there is yet more behind, for him who will meddle in the affairs of the broken company. How shall the principal sum therein contained, be paid; namely, the debt of obedience to the law, for life and salvation? The honouring of God could not allow the quitting of it: and they were absolutely unable to pay one mite of it, that would have been current in heaven; forasmuch as they were without strength, Rom. v. 6, and dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1, quite as unfit for

the doing part, as for the suffering part. But Christ became surety for this debt of theirs too, namely, the debt of obedience to the law as a covenant, which was, and is the only obedience to it for life; obliging himself to clear it by obeying in their room and stead, and fulfilling what the law could demand of them in this kind: Psalm xl. 7, 8, "Then said I, Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Matth. iii. 15, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Chap. v. 17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."

And here also there was an exchange of persons in law, Christ substituting himself in their room, and taking their obligation on himself: in virtue of which, he became the law's debtor for that obedience owing by them; and this he himself solemnly owned, by his being circumcised, Luke ii. 21, according to that of the apostle, Gal. v. 3, "I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." For becoming surety for them in this point also, he transferred on himself their state of servitude, whereby the law had a right to exact that debt of him, which they, upon the breach of the covenant of works, were liable in payment of.

For clearing of this, it is to be considered, that all mankind was by the first covenant, the covenant of works, constituted God's hired servants; and actually entered into that their service, in their head the first Adam. And in a token hereof, we are all naturally inclined in that character to deal with God; though by the fall we are rendered incapable to perform the duty of it, Luke xv. 19, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." The work they were to work, was perfect obedience to the holy law; the hire they were to have for their work, was life, Rom. x. 5, "The man that doth those things, shall live by them." The penalty of breaking away from their master, was bondage under the curse, Gal. iii. 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." But violating that covenant of hired service, they brake away from their Lord and Master: so they not only lost all plea for the hire, but they became bond-men under the curse; still obliged to make out their service, and that, furthermore, in the misery of a state of servitude or bondage, Gal. iv. 24, "These are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage." Their falling under the curse inferred the loss of their liberty, and constituted them bond-men; as appears from the nature of the thing, and instances of the cursed in other cases, as Gen. ix. 25, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of

servants shall he be." Josh. ix. 23, "Now therefore ye" (namely, the Gibeonites) "are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bond-men." The very ground being cursed, (Gen. iii. 17.) falls under bondage, according to the scripture, Rom. viii. 21.

Now, Christ saw all his spiritual seed in this state of servitude; but unable to bear the misery of it, or to fulfil the service: and he put himself in their room, as they were bond-men; transferring their state of servitude on himself, and so sisting himself a bond-servant for them.

The holy scripture sets this matter in a clear light. That is a plain testimony unto it, Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8, "Who being in the form of God—took upon him the form of a servant—and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." The form of a servant which he took upon him, was the form of a bond-servant. For so the word in the original properly signifies; being the same word that is constantly used in that New Testament phrase, which we read bond or free, or bond and free, 1 Cor. xii. 13; Gal. iii. 28; Eph. vi. 8; Col. iii. 11; Rev. xiii. 16. and xix. 18. And the apostle leads us to understand it so here, telling us, that this great surety-servant became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The which kind of death was a Roman punishment, called by them, the servile punishment, or punishment of bond-servants; because it was the death that bond-men malefactors were ordinarily doomed unto; freemen seldom, if ever, according to law. And forasmuch as his being in the form of God, denotes his being very God, having the very nature or essence of God; for the form is that which essentially distinguisheth things, and makes a thing to be precisely what it is; and this form is, according to the apostle, the foundation of his equality with God his Father, which nothing really different from the divine essence, can be: therefore his taking upon him the form of a bond-servant, must necessarily denote his becoming really a bond-servant, as really as ever man did, who was brought into bondage, or a state of servitude.

The Father solemnly declares the transferring of our state of servitude on Christ, speaking to him under the name of Israel, as was cleared before, Isa. xlix. 3, "Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." As if the Father had said to him, "Son, be it known, it is agreed that I take thee in the room and place of Israel, the spiritual seed, to perform the service due in virtue of the broken original contract: Thou in their stead art my servant; my bond-servant," as the word is rendered, Lev. xxv. 39, and elsewhere: "it is from thy hand I will look for that service." Agree-

able hereunto is the account we have of our redemption from the curse, Gal. iii. 13. namely, that it was by Jesus Christ being made a "curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:" the which Christ did, dying on a cross, the capital punishment of bond-men.

Behold the solemnity of the translation, Psalm xl. 6, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened." The word here rendered opened, properly signifies digged, as may be seen in the margin of our Bibles: and so the words are, "Mine ears thou diggedst through;" that is, boredst, as it is expressed in our paraphase of the Psalms in metre, "Mine ears thou bor'd." This has a manifest view to that law concerning the bond-servant, Exod. xxi. 6, "Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door-post: and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever;" that is, in the language of the law, till death. This is confirmed from Hos. iii. 2, "So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver;" which was the half of the stated price of a bond-woman, Exod. xxi. 32. In the original it is, "So I digged her through me;" the same word being here used by the Holy Ghost, as Psalm xl. 6. It is a pregnant word, which is virtually two in signification; and the sense is, I bought her, and bored her ear to my door-post, to be my bond-woman: according to the law, Deut. xv. 17, "Thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever: and also unto thy maid-servant thou shalt do likewise." That the boring of her ear as a bond-woman, was noways inconsistent with the prophet's betrothing of her to himself, Hos. iii. 3, appears from Exod. xxi. 8.

Joseph was an eminent type of Christ, as the Father's servant. And it is observable, that he was first a bond-servant, and then an honorary servant. In the former state, being sold for a servant, Psalm cv. 17, he was a type ofChrist, a bond-servant in his state of humiliation; whose most precious life was accordingly sold by Judas for thirty pieces of silver, the stated price of the life of a bond-servant; Exod. xxi. 32, "If the ox shall push a man-servant; or maid-servant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned." In the latter state, being made ruler over all the land of Egypt, Psalm cv. 21, 22; Gen. xli. 40, he was a type of Christ, in that most honourable and glorious service or ministry, which was conferred on him in his state of exaltation, wherein he was constituted a servant, for whose law the isles shall wait, Isa. xl. 1, 4; God having given him a name which is above

every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, Phil. ii. 9, 10. This latter service of Christ belongs to the promise of the covenant: but the former, to wit, the bond-service, being his surety-service, belongs to the condition of the covenant. Wherefore, rising from the dead, having fulfilled the condition of the covenant, paid the debt for which he became surety, and got up the discharge, he put off for ever the form and character of a bond-servant, "and rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living," Rom. xiv. 9.

And hence it clearly appears, how the obedience of the man Christ comes, in virtue of the covenant, to be imputed to believers for righteousness, as well as his satisfaction by suffering: for that kind of obedience which he performed as our surety, was no more due by him, antecedently to his contract of suretiship, than his satisfaction by suffering. It is true, the human nature of Christ, being a creature, owed obedience to God in virtue of its creation; and must owe it for ever, forasmuch as the creature, as a creature, is subject to the natural law, the eternal rule of righteousness: but Christ's putting himself in a state of servitude, taking on him the form of a bond-servant, and in the capacity of a bond-servant, performing obedience to the law, as it was stated in the covenant, for life and salvation was entirely voluntary. Obedience to the natural law was due by the man Christ, by a natural tie; but obedience to the positive law, binding to be circumcised, baptized and the like, which is supposed guilt on the party subjected thereto, was not due, but by his own voluntary engagement. And the obedience of a son to the natural law, he owed naturally: but obedience to that or any other law, in the character of a bond-servant, and thereby to gain eternal life and salvation, he owed not but by compact. The human nature of Christ had a complete right to eternal life, and was actually possessed thereof in virtue of its union with the divine nature; so that there was no occasion for him to gain life to himself by his obedience. Wherefore, Christ's taking on him the form of a bond-servant and in that character obeying the law for life and salvation, were a mere voluntary work of his, as surety for sinners; wherein he did that which he was no otherwise bound to, than by his own voluntary undertaking. Now, forasmuch as the obedience of Christ imputed to believers for righteousness, is his obedience of this kind only; there is a clear ground for its imputation to them according to the covenant.

And thus we have seen Christ's suretiship in the covenant to be of a suretiship for paying one's debt; and what the debt was which he became surety for.

If it be inquired, Whether or not Christ's suretiship is also of the nature of suretiship for one's performing of a deed? or, Whether Christ became surety in way of caution to his Father, that the elect should believe, repent, and perform sincere obedience? I answer, Though the elect's believing, repenting, and sincere obedience, are infallibly secured in the covenant; so that whosoever, being subjects capable of these things, do live and die without them, shall undoubtedly perish, and are none of God's elect: yet I judge, that Christ did not become Surety in the covenant, in way of caution to his Father, that the elect should perform these deeds, or any other; and that that way of speaking doth not so well agree with the scripture-account of the covenant. Because,

1. It doth somewhat obscure the grace, the free grace, of the covenant; whereas the covenant is purposely so ordered, as to manifest it most illustriously, being of faith, that it might be by grace, Rom. iv. 16. For such a suretiship, or cautionary for the elect's performing of these things, must needs belong to the condition of the covenant, properly so called; as being a deed of the Mediator, whereby he promiseth something to God, and engageth that it shall be performed by them: and so these things performed by them accordingly, must be a part of the condition of the covenant. But that sinners themselves perform any part of the condition of the covenant, properly so called, cannot be admitted without prejudice to the grace of the covenant: for so far as we perform, in our own persons, any part of the condition, the reward is not of grace, but of debt; for "to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt," Rom. iv. 4. But the reward is wholly of grace to us, as it is of debt unto Christ; for "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," ver. 5. Chap. xi. 6, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace." Suppose a man is surety for a thousand pounds for his neighbour, who is thereupon to have a right to a certain valuable benefit; and that this man absolutely becomes surety for the whole sum, excepting only an hundred pence; for which hundred pence also he becomes cautioner, that it shall be paid by the principal: it is evident, that the condition of this bargain is divided between the surety and the principal, though indeed their shares are very unequal: but however unequal they are, as far as the hundred pence which the principal pays in his own person, do reach, so far the benefit is of debt to him. Or put the case, A surety engageth for the whole of the sum payable; and, besides, is surety o· the principal's good behaviour; it is evident, that in this case the

good behaviour of the principal is a part of the condition of the bargain, as well as the payment of the money; since caution for it is required by him who is to communicate the benefit. At this rate, the condition is still divided between the surety and principal; and the latter performs a part of it as well as the former: and so the reward is, in part, of debt unto him, as well as to the surety. The application hereof to the case in hand is obvious. The sum of the matter lies here: If Christ did in the covenant become Surety in way of caution for his people's performing some deed; the performing of the condition of the covenant, properly so called, is divided betwixt Christ and them, however unequal their shares are: and if the performing of the condition is divided betwixt Christ and them, so far as their part of the performance goes, the reward is of debt to them, which obscures the grace of the covenant.

2. According to the Scripture, the elect's believing, repenting, and sincere obedience, do belong to the promissory part of the covenant. If we consider them in their original situation, they are benefits promised in the covenant by God unto Christ the Surety, as a reward of his fulfilling of the condition of the covenant. And so they are, by the unchangeable truth of God, and his exact justice, insured beyond all possibility of failure: Psalm xxii. 27, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord." Ver. 30, "A seed shall serve him." Ver. 31, "They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born." Psalm cx. 3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." See Isa. liii. 10. with ver. 1; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 31; Heb. viii. 10, 11. If it be asked, To whom are these promises made, and the promises of the like nature through the Bible? it is evident, that several of them are made to Christ expressly; and the apostle answers as to them all, Gal. iii. 16, "To Abraham and his seed were the promises made.—To thy seed which is Christ." And whereas there are found promises wherein Christ himself is the undertaker, as John vi. 37, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me;" they are not to be taken for Christ's engaging to his Father, as cautioner for a deed to be done by the seed: but therein he speaks to men, as administrator of the covenant, intrusted with the conferring on sinners the benefits purchased by his obedience and death, and made over to him by the promise of the Father: Matt. xi. 27, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." Ver. 28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Luke xxii. 29, "And I appoint [or dispone] unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed [or disponed] unto me." Thus far of Christ's suretiship in the covenant.

III. Christ the priest of the covenant.

As it was necessary for Christ the second Adam his doing the part of a Kinsman-redeemer, that he should become Surety in the covenant; so it was necessary to his performing of what he became Surety for, that he should be a Priest. And accordingly, consenting to the covenant, he became the Priest of the covenant, Heb. ix. 11, "Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come." A priest is a public person, who deals with an offended God in the name of the guilty, for reconciliation by sacrifice, which he offereth to God upon an altar, being thereto called of God, that he may be accepted. So a priest speaks a relation to an altar, an altar to a sacrifice, and a sacrifice to sin.

Those whom Christ represented in the covenant being sinners, he became their Priest, their High Priest, appearing before God in their name, to make atonement and reconciliation for them: and this was the great thing that the whole priesthood under the law, and especially the high priesthood, did typify and point at. Their nature was the priest's garments he put on, to exercise his priestly office in; the same being pure and undefiled in him: and in their nature he sustained their persons, representing them before God, as their great High Priest. A lively type hereof was Aaron's bearing before the Lord, the names of the children of Israel, the twelve tribes, upon his two shoulders, in the shoulder-pieces of the ephod; these names being engraven on two onyx-stones set therein by divine appointment, Exod. xxviii. 9, 10, 12: as also his bearing them in the breastplate, being engraven on twelve stones set therein, ver. 15—29. Thus Aaron the high-priest was all Israel representatively; an illustrious type of Christ the Priest of the covenant, the spiritual Israel representative, Isa. xlix. 3.

The necessity of Christ the second Adam his becoming a Priest, appears in these following things jointly considered.

1. Those whom he represented, were sinners: and there could not be a new covenant without provision made for removing of their sin; and that required a priest. The first covenant was made without a priest, because then there was no sin to take away; the parties therein represented, as well as the representative, were considered as innocent persons. But the second covenant was a covenant of peace and reconciliation between an offended God and sinners, not to be made but by the mediation of a priest, who should be able to remove sin, and repair the injured honour of God: Zech. vi. 13, He shall be a priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall

be between them both." And there was none fit to bear that character but Christ himself. No man was fit to bear it; because all men were sinners themselves, and such an high priest became us, as was undefiled, separated from sinners, Heb. vii. 26. It is true, the elect angels were indeed undefiled; but yet none of them could be priest of the covenant; because,

2. Sin could not be removed without a sacrifice of sufficient value, which they were not able to afford. The new covenant behoved to be a covenant by sacrifice, a covenant written in blood; and without shedding of blood, there was no remission, Heb. ix. 22. Therefore the typical covenant with Abraham was not made without the solemnity of sacrifice, Gen xv. 9; that he might know the covenant to be a covenant of reconciliation, in which a just God did not shew his mercy, but in a way consistent with the honour of his justice. Now the sacrifices of beasts, yea, and whatsoever the creatures could afford for sacrifice in this case, were infinitely below the value. But Jesus Christ becoming a priest, gave himself a sacrifice to God, for establishing the covenant; and that sacrifice was for a sweet-smelling savour, Eph. v. 2, or, as the Old Testament phrase is, a a savour of rest, Gen. viii. 21, marg. The represented being sinners, were corrupt and abominable before God; and he as it were smelled a savour of disquiet from them, they being a smoke in his nose, Isa. lxv. 6; their sin set his revenging justice and wrath astir. But the sacrifice of Christ himself, was fit to send forth such a sweet smelling savour unto God, as should quite overcome the abominable savour rising from them, and lay his revenging justice and wrath to the most calm and profoundest rest.

The necessity of a sacrifice in the second covenant, arose from the justice of God requiring the execution of the curse of the broken first covenant; whereby the sinner should fall a sacrifice for his sin, according to that, Psalm xciv. 23, "He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness." It was an ancient custom in making of covenants, to cut a beast in twain, and to pass between the parts of it: and that passing between the parts, respected the falling of the curse of the covenant upon the breaker: Jer. xxxiv. 18, "And I will give the men that have transgressed my covenant, which have not performed the words of the covenant which they had made before me, when they cut the calf in twain, and passed between the parts thereof;" or rather, more agreeably to the original, "I will make the men that have transgressed my covenant—the calf which they cut in twain, and passed between the parts thereof:" that is, I will make them as that calf which they cut in twain; I will execute the curse on them,

cutting them asunder as covenant-breakers, Matth. xxiv. 51. Now, the covenant of works being broken, justice required this execution of the curse of it, in order to the establishing of a new covenant, the covenant of grace and peace. But had it been executed on sinners themselves, the fire of wrath would have burnt continually on them; but never would such a sacrifice have sent forth a savour smelling so sweet, as to be a savour of rest to revenging justice; forasmuch as they were not only mere creatures, whose most exquisite sufferings could not be a sufficient compensation for the injured honour of an infinite God; but they were sinful creatures too, who would still have remained sinful under their sufferings. Wherefore Jesus Christ, being both separate from sinners, and equal with God, consented in the covenant to be the sacrifice, on which the curse of the first covenant might be executed in their room and stead.

This is lively represented in the covenant made with Abraham, in which he was a type of Christ, Gen. xv. In that covenant God promised the deliverance of Abraham's seed out of the Egyptian bondage, and to give them the land of Canaan; a type of the deliverance of Christ's spiritual seed from the bondage of sin and Satan, and of putting them in possession of heaven, vers. 13, 14, 16, 18. Awful was the solemnity used at the making of this covenant. There were taken a heifer, a she-goat, and a ram, each of them of three years old; typifying Christ, who was about three years in his public ministry, ver. 9. These were each of them, divided in the midst, hacked asunder by the middle; which typified the execution of the curse of the broken first covenenant on Christ our surety and sacrifice for us, ver. 10. Abraham's driving away the fowls that came down upon the carcases, typified Christ's victory over the devils all along during the state of his humiliation, and especially his triumphing over them on the cross, ver. 11. And finally, there was a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between the pieces; which signified the revenging wrath of God seizing on Christ the sacrifice, and justice therewith satisfied, ver. 17.

3. No sacrifice could be accepted, but on such an altar as should sanctify the gift to its necessary value and designed effect, Matth. xxiii. 19. And who could furnish that but Christ himself, whose divine nature was the altar from whence the sacrifice of his human nature derived its value and efficacy as infinite? Heb. ix. 14, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered up himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works?" His blessed body suffering and bleeding to death on the cross, and his holy soul scorched and melted within him with the fire of the divine wrath, both in the meantime

united to his divine nature, were the sacrifice burning on the altar, from which God smelled a sweet savour, to the appeasing of his wrath, and satisfying of his justice fully. Not that Christ was a sacrifice only while on the cross; but that his offering of himself a sacrifice, which was begun from his incarnation in the womb, the sacrifice being led on the altar in the first moment thereof; and was continued through his whole life; was completed on the cross, and in the grave: Heb. x. 5, "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me:"—ver. 6, "Then said I, lo, I come." Isa. liii. 2, "When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Ver. 3, "He is—a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." 2 Cor. v. 21, "He hath made him to be sin for us."

4. *Lastly*, There behoved to be a priest to offer this sacrifice, this valuable sacrifice, unto God upon that altar; else there could have been no sacrifice to be accepted, and so no removal of sin, and consequently no new covenant. And since Christ himself was the sacrifice, and the altar too, he himself alone could be the priest. And forasmuch as the weight of the salvation of sinners lay upon his call to that office, he was made priest of the covenant by the oath of God, Heb. vii. 20, 21. As he had full power over his own life, to make himself a sacrifice for others; so his Father's solemn investing of him with this office by an oath, gave him access to offer himself effectually; even in such sort as thereby to fulfil the condition of the condition, and to purchase eternal life for them.

INFERENCES FROM THE SECOND HEAD.

I shall close up this head, of the making of the covenant of grace, with two inferences from the whole.

Inf. 1. What remains for sinners, that they may be personally and savingly in covenant with God, is not, as parties contractors and undertakers, to make a covenant with him for life and salvation; but only, to take hold of God's covenant already made from eternity, between the Father and Christ the second Adam, and revealed and offered to us in the gospel, Isa. lvi. 4, 6. I have no design hereby to disparage our covenants made for national reformation by our godly progenitors, and commonly called the national covenant, and solemn league and covenant, on which God set the seal of his good pleasure in the experience of many. These and the like are covenants of duties, consequential enough to the taking hold of God's covenant of grace. Neither would I discourage any serious souls, from taking hold of God's covenant of grace, for eter-

nal life and salvation to themselves, with all the awful solemnity of the most express words, yea, and of writing and subscribing it with their hands; which is commonly called personal covenanting. But I would have all to beware of a practical corrupting of the covenant of grace, by making covenants of their own, upon such and such terms, which they will fulfil for life and salvation. The carnal Jews mistaking the design of the giving of the law, did so corrupt the covenant of grace; looking for life and salvation, not for the sake of the promised seed alone, but for their obedience, such as it was, to the moral and ceremonial laws. And thus many, thinking that eternal salvation is proposed to them in the word upon the condition of faith, repentance, and sincere obedience to God's law, do consent to these terms, and solemnly undertake to perform them: just binding themselves to such and such duties, that God may save their souls: and so they make their covenant. And while they can persuade themselves, that they perform their part of the covenant, they look for life and salvation thereupon. This doth quite overturn the nature of the covenant of grace: for "to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt," Rom. iv. 4; and "if it be of works, then it is no more grace," chap. xi. 6. The sinfulness of this practice is great, as overlooking Christ, the great undertaker and party-contractor by the appointment of the Father; and putting themselves in his room, to do and work for themselves for life. And the danger of it must needs be great, as laying a foundation to bear the weight of their salvation, which divine wisdom saw to be quite unable to bear it. The issue whereof must be, that such covenanters shall lie down in sorrow. So the apostle determines, Gal. v. 4, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."

Our part then, in this case, is only to take hold of God's covenant made already, and offered and exhibited to us in the gospel. This hold is taken by faith; which is, in Scripture account, the hand of the soul, John i. 12. So the original expression plainly carries it, Isa. lvi. 46, "That fasten in my covenant." In which phraseology, the correlate word hand (expressed Gen. xxi. 18,) is understood; *q. d.* That fasten (their hand) in my covenant; that is to say, "Who by the hand of faith take fast hold of my covenant;" as Adonijah did of the horns of the altar, 1 Kings i. 50, wherein the same manner of expression is used. And this you do by taking hold of Christ in the free promise of the gospel; believing that he is held forth to you in particular, confiding and trusting in him as your Saviour, for your salvation from sin and wrath, upon the ground of God's faithfulness in the promise, that whosoever believeth in him,

shall not perish, but have everlasting life, for he is given for a covenant to you, Isa. xlix. 8; and to receive him, is to believe on his name, John i. 12.

This is our making a covenant with God by sacrifice, which is mentioned, Psalm l. 5. The original expression is, That cut my covenant upon a sacrifice; namely, by laying their hands in faith on the head of the sacrifice, thereupon cut down in their stead: and so ceremonially transferring their guilt on the sacrifice; but really and spiritually, approving of the device of salvation by a crucified Saviour, and falling in with it as the method of salvation for them. In this way of covenanting, the free grace of the covenant is preserved pure and entire: for "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," Rom. iv. 5. Here the honour of sole undertaker and party-contractor in the covenant, is, according to the Father's appointment left to Christ, the One that is mighty, Psalm lxxxix. 19. Here the second Adam builds the temple, without our laying one stone therein in our own persons; even as the first Adam laid it in ruins, without our pulling down one stone of it in our own persons: and Christ bears the personal glory of the reparation, even as Adam the personal blame of the ruin, Zech. vi. 13. And at this rate the soul doth in time, for her own part, give her solemn approbation of the covenant made from eternity, and a personal consent to what Christ from everlasting consented to in her name: even as the princess married by proxy in her childhood, ratifies all when she is come to age, by receiving her husband. Like as all Adam's children, as such, taking salvation to heart, and therefore covenanting with God, do in effect repeat the covenant of works made with Adam their representative; so all the second Adam's seed, as such, taking salvation to heart, and therefore covenanting with God, do, in effect repeat the covenant of grace made with Christ their representative. In the making of the covenant before the world began, the Father proposed to Christ as second Adam, their head and representative, that he should take the burden upon him for them, and be their Kinsman-redeemer, their Surety for their debt of punishment and duty, and their Priest; and Christ consented thereto from eternity. Amen, for my part, says the elect soul in time, in the covenanting day; it is infinitely well ordered: I am a lost sinner, a debtor to divine justice, a guilty creature; he is, with my whole heart and soul, *my* Kinsman-redeemer, *my* Surety, *my* Priest: my part of the punishment incurred, and of the duty owing, is a vast and exceeding great part of that debt; but my soul is well content with and rests in that method of paying it: 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, "He

hath made with me an everlasting covenant," (Heb. He hath put to me an everlasting covenant)—"This is all my salvation and all my desire." The Father said to Christ as their representative, For thy so doing and suffering, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Amen, said Christ from eternity, "All mine are thine," John xvii. 10. Amen, for my part, says the elect soul in the time of personal covenanting. This heart of mine must have some God, I must belong to one or other; and too long have I been for another: but now, timber of the house, and stones of the wall, bear witness, my soul is content with, consents to, and rests in this method of disposing of me; namely, that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be my God in Christ, and I one of his people from henceforth and for ever.

This manner of covenanting is inconsistent with a purpose or desire of continuing in sin; even as one's committing himself for cure into the hands of a physician who cures infallibly, is inconsistent with a desire to keep his disease hanging about him. Christ being "made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30; it necessarily carries along with it, a taking of Christ for a Prophet, and a King, and Lord unto us; as such a one doth necessarily yield himself to the physician's management. In it one joins himself to Christ as his covenant head, who also is the Administrator of the covenant; and so subjects himself to his teaching and government. And it is such a way of covenanting, as no profane person, nor hypocrite, continuing so, ever did or can fall in with. For, (1.) It speaks a heart content to part with all sin, well pleased with Christ's whole salvation, whereof the principal part is to save his people from their sins, Matth. i. 21; whereas unsound covenanters are always offended with some one thing or other in Christ, chap. xi. 6. (2.) It speaks a soul carried out of all confidence in itself, its own working and doing for life and salvation, and bottomed only upon Christ's doing and suffering for that end. And thus, such a covenanter, being poor in spirit, Matth. v. 3, and rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh, Phil. iii. 3, is distinguished from the presumptuous hypocrite, whose confidence for life and salvation is ever upon his own doing and working, either in whole or in part; as also from the despairing unbeliever, who hath no confidence, neither in Christ, nor in himself that he shall have life and salvation, however he may believe firmly that others shall. So this faith, this covenanting, is quite another thing, than either the false faith of the presumptuous profane, and presumptuous hypocrite, or the no-faith of the desperate, or the wavering doubter, who can never fix in greater or lesser measure of confi-

dence in Christ, for salvation to himself; Jam. i. 6, "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth, is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed." Ver. 7, "For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."

If any think this to be an easy way of believing or covenanting, either they mistake it, or try it not. To believe upon some ground we see in ourselves, is very natural, but to believe merely upon a ground in another, namely righteousness in Christ, and faithfulness in God, while all in ourselves tends to make us dispair, is above the reach of nature. A conscience thoroughly awakened, will convince a sinner, that it is a matter of greatest difficulty.

Inf. 2. Justifying faith, though it receives Christ in all his offices, as Prophet, Priest, and King; yet as it enters us personally into the covenant, and justifies, it eyes him in his priestly office particularly; namely, as the great high priest, who hath made atonement for sin, by the sacrifice of himself; as the surety, who undertook and completed the payment of the debt of punishment and duty; and as the kinsman redeemer, who having married our nature to the divine nature in himself, redeemed the mortgaged inheritance with his own blood, gave himself a ransom for us, to deliver us from our spiritual bondage, and by his death destroyed him that had the power of death; Rom. iii. 25, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood." Chap. v. 11, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." The comfort for a wounded conscience, sick with the guilt of sin, lies here. This is that office of Christ to which the convinced sinner, standing trembling before the just Judge of the world, lifts his eyes and makes his recourse for safety: for there, and only there, can one see a ransom, a righteousness, an atonement. In his prophetical and kingly office, he administrates the covenant; but in his priestly office, he performed the condition of it. So it is the foundation of the other two. It was by the sacrifice of himself, that the word and Spirit of the covenant, whereby he teacheth sinners, were purchased: and thereby also he obtained his kingdom. And his intercession is founded upon his oblation. So his priestly office and that considered particularly in point of his offering his sacrifice, doth, as the foundation stone, bear the weight of the salvation of sinners, and of the honour of God and the Mediator therein. Wherefore it is not strange, that his investiture with the priestly office was confirmed by the oath of God; a solemnity not used in the case of his prophetical and kingly offices.

And thus far of the making of the covenant.

HEAD III.

THE PARTS OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

THE parts of the covenant of grace, being the things therein agreed upon betwixt God and Christ the second Adam, are two, to wit, the conditionary part, and the promissory part. These comprehend the whole of the covenant, and of them we shall treat in order.

The first part of the covenant, namely, the conditionary part.

The condition of a covenant or bargain, properly and commonly so called, is, that part of a covenant or bargain, upon the performing of which one's right to the benefit promised is founded, and his plea for it is stated, as becoming due to him for his performance, according to, and in virtue of the agreement between the parties. This is a federal condition, a covenant-condition, or the condition of a covenant; and what all men, in common conversation understand by a condition of a covenant or bargain. As for instance, the paying of such a sum of money for such a commodity, according to the agreement between the parties, in the condition of a covenant of commerce, sale, or traffic: the working of such a piece of work, or doing of such a deed, for such a reward agreed upon by the parties, is the condition of a covenant of service on hire.

Besides this, there is also what is called a condition of connection or order in a covenant; whereby one thing necessarily goes before another, in the order of the covenant without being the ground upon which one's right and title to that other thing is founded. As in the former instances, the buyer's receiving of the commodity, and the hireling's receiving of the reward, covenanted or bargained for, must needs go before their profession or enjoyment of them; but it is evident, that that receiving is not the thing upon which the buyer's right and title to the commodity, or the hirling's right and title to the reward, is founded: therefore, though it may be called a condition of connection in the respective covenants, yet it cannot, in any propriety of speech, be called the condition of them.

Now, to apply these things to our purpose: in the order of the covenant of grace, forasmuch as the having of the Spirit must go before faith, faith before justification, justification before sanctification, holiness before heaven's happiness; these may be called conditions in the covenant of grace, to wit, conditions of certain connection; and this belongs to the established order of the promises of the covenant, which are contradistinguished to the condition of the covenant. Howbeit such conditions can in no proper sense be

called the condition or conditions of the covenant of grace, more than the buyer's receiving of the commodity can be called the condition of the covenant or bargain of sale. But the condition of the covenant of grace, properly so called, is, Christ in the form of a bond-servant, as last Adam, Representative, Kinsman-redeemer, Surety, and Priest, his fulfilling all righteous owing, in virtue of the broken covenant of works, unto God by his spiritual seed: Matth. iii. 15, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

For clearing of this purpose, I shall, (1.) Evince this to be the condition of the covenant; (2.) Explain and unfold that righteousness, the fulfilling whereof was made the condition of the covenant.

First, To evince that this is the condition of the covenant of grace consider,

1. Christ's fulfilling all right eousness as second Adam is what the Father proposed unto him, as the terms on which his seed should be saved, and upon which he founded his promise of eternal life to be given them; and not any work or deed of theirs: Isa. liii. 10, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed." Ver. 11, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." Luke xxii. 20, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." And the same is that which Christ as the second Adam did from eternity consent unto, undertake, and bind himself for; and which he did in time, according to agreement perform. Thus he himself represents it, Matth. iii. 15, "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness;" namely, as it becometh a person of honour and credit to fulfill his bargain. Luke xxiv. 26, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" to wit, as one ought to perform the condition of a covenant or bargain he has agreed to.

2. This is the only ground of a sinner's right and title to eternal life; and upon nothing else can he safely found his plea before the Lord for life and salvation; Eph. i. 7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Phil. iii. 8, 9, "That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteusness—but—the righteousness which is of God by faith." Surely upon the condition of the covenant fulfilled, one may found his plea before the Lord for the benefits promised in the covenant: but no man may found his plea before the Lord for these on any work or deed of his own whatsoever, no not on faith itself; but only on Christ's fulfilling all righteousness: therefore no work nor deed of ours whatsoever, no not faith itself, can be the condition of the covenant of grace pro-

perly so called; but only Christ's fulfilling all righteousness. The sinner standing in the court of conscience, trembling before the Lord, flees in under the covert of that righteousness fulfilled by the Mediator, and dare oppose nothing but it to the condemning sentence of the law, giving up with all other pleas for life and salvation. Believing in Christ is the pleading upon that ground, not the ground of the sinner's plea: it saith, "My Lord and my God" in the promise, upon the ground of Christ's fulfilling all righteousness allenarly, as the condition of the covenant. If any will make it the ground of their plea, they must needs produce it as a work of a law, that is, as a deed done by them, whereby they have fulfilled and answered a law, and whereupon they crave the benefit promised: which will, according to the scripture, be found a dangerous adventure, Rom. iii. 20; Gal. ii. 16; and v. 4.

3. It is by this, and this alone, the salvation of sinners becomes a debt: therefore this alone is the condition of the covenant. For the reward is of debt to him, and him only, who fulfills the condition of a covenant: to him that worketh, not to him that worketh not, but believeth, Rom. iv. 4, 5. And so it is of debt to Christ alone, not to us; and therefore it was he that fulfilled the condition of the covenant; we fulfil no part of it. This is confirmed from the primitive situation of mankind with reference to eternal life, in the first Adam's covenant, duly considered. The condition thereof was perfect active obedience. And, according to the nature of that covenant, if this obedience had been fulfilled by Adam, eternal life to him and his would thereupon have become a debt to him. And the plea of his posterity for life, in that case, would not have been founded on their personal obedience coming after that fulfilment; since it would not have been the performance of the condition, but the fruit of the promise, of the covenant: but it would have been founded on that performance of Adam their representative; forasmuch as, in the case supposed, it would have been the only obedience whereby the condition of that covenant was fulfilled; and so they would have obtained life, not for any personal work or deed of theirs, but for the obedience of the first Adam their representative, to which God did graciously make the promise of life, in the first covenant.

4. Faith and obedience are benefits promised in the covenant, upon the condition of it, as hath been already evinced; and, in virtue of the promises of the covenant, they are produced in the elect: therefore they cannot be the condition of the covenant. And elect infants are saved, though they are neither capable of believing nor of obeying: howbeit, the condition of the covenant must needs

be performed, either by themselves who are saved, or else by another in their stead. Therefore Christ's fulfilling all righteousness, which is the only obedience performed in their stead, must be the alone proper condition of the covenant.

5. *Lastly*, The covenant of grace doth so exclude our boasting, as the covenant of works did not. This is clear from Rom. iii. 27, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." But if any deed or work of ours be the condition of the covenant of grace, in whole or in part, our boasting is not excluded, but hath place therein, as in the covenant of works; the difference being at most but in point of degrees: for, according to the scripture, it is working, or fulfilling the condition of a covenant, that gives the ground of boasting; forasmuch as to him that worketh, the reward is reckoned of debt: and life being of or by works in the covenant of works, though not in the way of proper merit, but in the way of paction or compact only, this gave men the ground of boasting in that covenant, according to the scripture. Therefore, so far as life and salvation are of or by any work or deed of ours, as fulfilling the condition of the covenant of grace, our boasting is not excluded, but hath place therein, as in the covenant of works. Wherefore, since the covenant of grace is so framed, as to leave no ground for our boasting, no work nor deed of ours, but Christ's fulfilling all righteousness, even that alone, is the condition of the covenant of grace: and our life and salvation are neither of works, nor by works, as fulfilling the condition of the covenant: Tit. iii. 5, "Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." Eph. ii. 9, "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

God forbid we should go about to justle faith and obedience out of the covenant of grace: those who do so in principle or practice, will thereby justle themselves out of the kingdom of heaven: Matt. v. 19, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven;" that is, he shall be treated as he treated that one of these commandments, he shall be judged unworthy of the fellowship of that kingdom. Faith is necessary savingly to interest us in Jesus Christ the head of the covenant: and none can attain to eternal happiness, without actual believing, who are subjects capable of it; nor can any attain it without the Spirit of faith indwelling in them. Obedience is necessary, as the chief subordinate end of the covenant, being that whereby God hath his glory he designed therein: and without obedience begun here, none who are subjects capable of it, can see heaven. But withal it is necessary,

that they be kept in the place and station assigned them in the covenant by the Father and the Son from eternity. By faith we personally embrace the covenant, consent to, and rest in the condition of the covenant fulfilled by Christ; and so are justified and brought into a state of salvation: John x. 9, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." Compare John i, 12; and iii. 16; and xiv. 6. By evangelical repentance and gospel-obedience, we testify our thankfulness to God, and evidence the truth of our faith, and our being within the covenant: 1 Pet. ii. 9, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:" ver. 10, "Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." Compare Rom. vi. 13. and xii. 1, 2; 1 Cor. vi. 20.

This the prophet taught the Jewish church of old, Mic. vi. 8, "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" In the sixth verse, a most important question is put, concerning the acceptance of a sinner with God, how it may be obtained, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" and several costly expedients for that purpose are proposed by the sinner, even to the giving of "the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul," ver. 6, 7. But the prophet answers that question in a word, tacitly upbraiding them with gross stupidity, in their groping for the wall in broad day-light, even as in the night: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good;" that is, what is goodly, valuable, and acceptable, in the sight of God, for that purpose, even for a sinner's obtaining pardon and acceptance with God; namely, the Messias, Jesus Christ sacrificed for sinners. This was what God had all along, by his prophets, and by the whole ceremonial law, pointed out to them, and set before them, as the good for that purpose, that they might by faith look thereunto, and be saved, Isa. xlv. 22. And, in the style of the Holy Ghost, Christ crucified is elsewhere spoken of under the same notion: 2 Chron. xxx. 18, "The good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God." Orig. "Jehovah the good make atonement for," &c. Psalm lxxxv. 12, "The Lord shall give that which is good;" or, shall give the good. Compare John iv. 10, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is." Isa. lv. 2, "Eat ye that which is good." Compare John vi. 55, "My flesh is meat indeed." Job xxxiv. 4, "Let us know among ourselves what is good." Ver. 5, "For Job hath said, I am righteous." Now, being thus accepted of God, what doth he

require of thee in point of gratitude, but to do justly, as one accepted not without a righteousness answering the demands of justice and judgment: and to love mercy, as one who hath obtained mercy; and to walk humbly with thy God, as one who is free grace's debtor? In the same manner of expression doth Moses address himself to the people secured of the possession of Canaan by the oath of God, and being just to enter upon it, Deut. x. 11, 12, "And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God," &c.? namely, in point of gratitude, for his giving thee that good land.

Inf. From what is said it appears that your life and salvation entirely depend on your special interest in Christ's righteousness. If ye are possessed of it your salvation is secure; if not, salvation is far from you. If you were never so full of your own righteousness, works, doings, and sufferings, all is but filthy rags in this case, and cannot give you a right or title to life: and although you can see nothing of your own in yourselves, which you can lean to before the Lord, yet if the righteousness of Christ is yours in possession, by faith, your life and salvation are firm as a rock.

Case. How then shall I know that Christ's righteousness is indeed mine in possession? Answ. The Lord himself gives a distinguishing character of such happy possessors, Isa. li. 7, "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law." They that know righteousness, are, in the style of the Scripture, those whose it is, agreeable to the phrase, Matth. xxv. 12, "I know you not," *q. d.* Ye are none of mine, I acknowledge you not as mine. So this character consists of two parts. (1.) They are such as acknowledge Christ's righteousness as their only righteousness in the sight of God, and look to it alone for life and salvation, renouncing all their own righteousness: Isa. liii. 11. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many;" that is by the knowledge or acknowledgement of him, which is by faith. (2.) They have the law of God in their hearts. The righteous people, righteous by faith, are a holy people. They make conscience of internal obedience; for the holy law rules within them, even there whither no eye reacheth, but the eyes of God and their own consciences. So they are distinguished from hypocrites, who are "like unto whited sepulchres, beautiful outward, but within full of all uncleanness." They make conscience of external obedience too; for as the candle burning within the lanthorn will shine through it, so the law of God ruling in the heart, cannot miss to rule in the life and conversation too: Matth. vi. 22, "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." And so they are

distinguished from the profane, whose unholy lives declare them to have neither part nor lot in this righteousness: Psalm xxiv. 3, 4, "Who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands." And the law is not only in their minds by its light, to drive them to obedience; as in the case of legalists, who work like slaves; but it is in their hearts and affections, discovering to their souls the beauty of holiness; and so drawing them to all obedience, and causing them to work like sons to a father. Their hearts are reconciled to the purity of the holy law, and they delight in it after the inward man, Rom. vii. 22, and would fain reach a full conformity unto it, saying from the heart, "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" Psalm cxix. 5.

Secondly, To unfold that righteousness, the fulfilling of which was made the condition of the covenant of grace, we shall view it in the several parts thereof. That righteousness, forasmuch as it was to be fulfilled in the room and stead of sinners, was and must be stated from the law, or broken covenant of works, which they were lying under; for the law, or broken covenant of works, was so far from being neglected in the new bargain, that whatsoever it had to charge upon, or demand of the parties contracted for in the new covenant, was summed up, and set down therein, to be fully cleared by Christ their surety contracting for them. Now, stating that righteousness from thence, it will be found to consist of three parts making so many conditionary articles of the covenant of grace: to wit, holiness of nature, righteousness of life, and satisfaction for sin. Of the which in order.

ARTICLE I.

HOLINESS OF NATURE.

THE law required holiness of nature as a condition of life, inasmuch as condemning original sin, saying "Thou shalt not covet," it concluded all men to be by nature children of wrath. For God being essentially holy, holy by necessity of nature, nothing can be so contrary to God as an unholy nature; because, howbeit persons or things of a like nature may be contrary in some points, yet they can never be so contrary one to another, as those of quite opposite natures. But the parties contracted for in the covenant of grace, having their nature wholly corrupted, and being incapable to purify it, or make their heart clean, Prov. xx. 9; it is evident, they could by no means answer this demand of the law by themselves. Wherefore, for the

satisfaction of the law in this point, it was settled as a conditionary article of the covenant of grace, "That Christ the second Adam, representing them, should be a man of a perfectly holy, pure and untainted nature, fully answering for them the holiness and perfection of nature required by the law." "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," Heb. vii. 16. And this article contains two clauses.

I. "That he, as the second Adam, should be conceived and born holy, for and instead of them corrupt in their nature, conceived and born in sin." There was a holy nature given to Adam as the root of mankind, to be by him kept and transmitted to his posterity, in the way of natural generation. And upon this ground, the law requires all men to be born holy, pronouncing them unclean and children of wrath, in the contrary event, Job xiv. 4; Eph. ii. 3. But how could this demand be answered by sinners? They are born in sin: they cannot enter again into their mother's womb, and be born a second time, without sin. No, they cannot: yet the law will not bate of that demand for life. Wherefore it is provided, that Christ, as a public person, representing his spiritual seed, should be born perfectly holy; that, whereas they brought a sinful corrupt nature into the world with them, he should bring a holy human nature into the world with him. And so he was the last Adam, 1 Cor. xv. 45, holy and undefiled, Heb. viii. 26, "that holy thing born," Luke i. 35. And the effect thereof with respect to that law-demand for life is, that all believers are, in law-reckoning, born holy in the second Adam, even as they were created holy in the first Adam. Hence they are expressly said to be crucified in him, Col. ii. 11, which plainly presupposeth their being born in him. And it is in virtue of their being legally born holy in Christ, when he was born, that, being united to him in the time of loves, they are really born again, and at length perfected; even as in virtue of their being legally defiled in Adam, when he sinned, they are actually and really defiled in their own persons, coming into the world: the holy nature being actually communicated to them from Christ their spiritual head, in whom they were legally born holy; even as the corruption of nature is actually conveyed to them from Adam their natural head, in whom they sinned in law-reckoning.

2. The other clause is, "That Christ, as the second Adam, should retain the holiness of nature inviolate unto the end, for them and in their name." The law, or covenant of works, required, as a condition of life, that the holiness of nature, given to mankind in Adam, should be preserved pure and incorrupt. But it was lost: and put the case, that it had been restored, they could not have retained it,

in their own persons, unstained amidst so many snares. Wherefore, to satisfy the law-demand in this point, it was provided, that in the man Christ, as a public person representative of his seed, their nature should be kept perfectly holy unto the end, without the least stain or defilement: Isa. xlii. 4, "He shall not fail;" or, "he shall not wax dim," or wrinkle, as the skin doth when the moisture is exhausted. Therein the first Adam failed. He shone in purity of nature, as he came from the Creator's hand: but he failed, he waxed dim; the holiness of his nature being exhausted by sin, all mankind in him lost their spiritual beauty, and wrinkled. But now that the second Adam failed not, but preserved the holiness of human nature in him unstained, not in the least darkened, even to the end of his life; the remains of the corruption of nature in believers are not imputed to them, Rom. iv. 8; but as defiled as they are in themselves, through those remains cleaving to them, yet in Christ their beauty is fresh, and not marred in the least, according to that, Cant. iv. 7, "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee."

ARTICLE II.

RIGHTEOUSNESS OF LIFE.

This also the law insisted upon as a condition of life; and justly: for God gave to Adam, and all mankind in him, a law to be obeyed in all points; not only in virtue of the tie of natural duty, but in virtue of the bond of a covenant for life: but it was never fulfilled by them. The first Adam began indeed the course of obedience; but he quickly fell off from it, with all his natural seed in him. Now, it being inconsistent with the honour of the law, that the prize, to wit, eternal life, should be obtained without the race was run; it still insisted, saying, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," Matth. xix. 17. Howbeit, we were weak, moveless, without strength for running that race. Wherefore it was settled as another conditionary article of the covenant, "That Christ, as a public person, represented those whom he contracted for, should begin and perfect the course of obedience to the law in righteousness of life." And accordingly, he became obedient unto death, Phil. ii. 8.

The law, which was the rule of this obedience, exacted of him, was the same law of the ten commands, that was given to Adam, and binding on us as under it: for he was made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, Gal. iv. 4, 5. It extended to all divine institutions which the second Adam found in being, whe-

ther obliging men as men, or as members of the church of God on earth: even as the rule of the first Adam's obedience, extended to the positive law touching the forbidden fruit, which was in being when he was set to fulfil his covenant-obedience.

That we may the more distinctly comprehend this article, it may be observed to bear these three things following.

1. "That he, as the second Adam, should obey the whole law, in the name of those he represented." This was a debt owing by them all; and was required of them by the law, as a condition of life: Gal. iii. 10. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." But the answering of this demand was quite beyond their reach. Man, by the fall, having lost much of his knowledge of the law, had lost sight of many of the duties required therein: howbeit, ignorance of the law excuseth no man. His heart was averse to and enmity against the law, Rom. viii. 7. And he was without strength to perform the duties therein required of him, chap. v. 6. So that by reason of ignorance, aversion, and impotency in that matter, the obedience of the whole law was not to be had from them. Wherefore it was provided, that Christ, as their representative, should give obedience to the whole law for them; that both tables of the law, and each command of each table, should have the due obedience from him; that the law being laid before him in its spirituality and full extent, he should fully answer it, in internal and external obedience, in his mind, will, and affections, in thought, word, and deed; that he should conform himself to the whole natural law, and to all divine institutions, ceremonial or political, so as to be circumcised, keep the passover, to be baptized, to be a servant of or subject to rulers, pay tribute to whom it was due, and the like: in one word, that he should perform the whole will of God, signified in his law; so that with the safety of the law's honour, his people might have life. What the first Adam failed in, the second Adam was to do. And this I take to be represented unto us, in the case of the first and second king of Israel, to wit, Saul and David, Acts xiii. 22. "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will;" Gr. "all my wills." In which there is a plain view to Saul, who was partial in his obedience to the will of God, (1 Sam. xv.) and upon that score lost the kingdom for him and his.

2. "That every part of that obedience should be carried to the highest pitch and degree." This the law required of them, as a condition of life; as our Lord himself shewed unto the lawyer, Luke x. 27, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and

with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Ver. 28, "This do, and thou shalt live." But it was a demand they could never have answered, since Adam had squandered away their stock of ability, and left them without strength. They might as soon have reached up their hands to the sun in the firmament, so far above, as have attained to the perfection of obedience demanded of them by the law. Wherefore it was agreed, that Christ should in their name obey the law in that perfection, being made under the law, as they were under it, Gal. iv. 4, 5; that every action of his should bear, not only a goodness of the matter, but of the manner too, and that in perfection; that love to God and man should flame in his holy human soul, to the utmost pitch required by the law; and so that debt owing by his seed, might be cleared by him, acting as a public man in their name.

3. *Lastly*, "That all this should be continued to the end, without the least failure in one jot of parts or degrees of obedience." This also was a condition of life stated in the first covenant; Gal. iii. 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." But it was a demand they could by no means answer; man's nature being so vitiated by the fall, that if a thousand hells were lying upon it, the best on earth could not keep perfectly right one hour. Wherefore it was agreed, that the second Adam should, in the name of those he represented, continue in all things written in the law to do them, even to the end; that he should not fail in his begun course of obedience, but run to the end of the race set before him; that from the womb to the grave, his heart and life should shine in perfection of holiness. All which he did accordingly fulfil, being obedient unto death, Philip. ii. 8.

ARTICLE III.

SATISFACTION FOR SIN.

THE former two were in the condition of Adam's covenant: but this was not in it; for while there was no sin, there was no place for satisfaction for sin. But the new covenant behoved to be settled on the condition of a satisfaction for sin; because the broken law or covenant of works, insisted for it as a condition of life to sinners, in virtue of its penalty by them incurred. Howbeit, it was quite beyond their power to answer this demand of the law. If then the

Mediator will have a seed brought from the state of death, into a state of life and salvation, he must buy them from the hand of justice, telling down a price for every soul of them, 1 Cor. vi. 20. Accordingly, all the sins of every one of them, from the first sin they should be convinced and born in, to the last sin they should expire with, being foreseen of God from eternity, were summed up as so many breaches of the law or covenant of works: and it was made another conditionary article of the covenant, "That Christ, as a public person, should satisfy fully and completely for them all:" Isa. liii. 6, "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all; compared with Lev. xvi. 21, "All the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins."

Now, in this article there were three things established.

First, "That Christ, as a public person, should satisfy for them by suffering:" Luke xxiv. 26, "Ought not Christ to have suffered?" Sinners were liable to suffer for the satisfaction of justice: and nothing but suffering could be accepted, as a compensation of the injury done by sin, to the honour of God, in the violating of his holy law. Thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, were at the Mediator's command; all the silver and gold, and the precious things of the earth and seas, were at his disposal: but none of these could be of use in this bargain; they were all of no value in a treaty for the redemption of the soul, Mic. vi. 6, 7, 8; 1 Pet. i. 18. His own suffering could only avail here. That the Son of God should suffer, was indeed an amazing proposal; but it was necessary, in order to satisfy for our sin.

Secondly, "That he should suffer the same punishment they should have suffered in virtue of the penalty of the broken covenant of works;" and that was death in its full latitude and extent. This appears from the penalty of that covenant, from which the debt of satisfaction was stated, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 17; compared with Christ's dying for, that is, in the room and stead of sinners, so often mentioned in the Scriptures, Rom. v. 6, 8; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; 1 Thess. v. 10. And it is confirmed from that the Scripture teacheth, that the all for whom Christ died, died in him, 2 Cor. v. 14, "If one died for all, then were all dead;" or, then the all died, to wit, in him; even as they sinned, and became liable to death, in Adam. So saith the apostle, "I am crucified with Christ," Gal. ii. 20.

For clearing this purpose, two things are to be distinguished in that death which was the penalty of the covenant of works. 1. What was essential to it, wrapt up in the very nature of the thing itself called death in the stile of that covenant. And that may be

compromised in these two: (1.) The curse, (2.) Infinite execution; the former making the death legal, the latter making it real and satisfactory. 2. What was accidental to it, arising, not from the nature of the thing in itself, but from the nature of the party dying that death. And this is of two sorts. (1.) There is something arising from the nature of the dying party, as he is a mere creature; such as the eternity of the punishment and despair of life. (2.) Something arising from the nature of the dying party, as he is a sinful creature, or subject of inherent sin; such as the extinction of the saving relation betwixt God and the soul, the divesting it of God's image, and the corruption and dissolution of the body.

Now, the essentials of that death we should have suffered in virtue of the penalty of the broken covenant of works, were laid, as a part of the condition of the covenant of grace, on Jesus Christ, to be suffered by him, for us. For he was "made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13, and "gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour," Eph. v. 2, that is, a sacrifice equalling the infinite offence arising from our sin; whence he is said, "by one suffering" to have "perfected for ever them that are sanctified," Heb. x. 14. But the accidentals of that death were no part of the condition of the covenant laid on him: nor could they at all have place in him; since he was neither a subject of inherent sin, nor yet a mere creature. Nevertheless, it was still the same death that we should have suffered; forasmuch as the essentials were the same. Thus the bodies of the saints, which are now weak and corruptible, shall at the resurrection be powerful and incorruptible, yet still the same bodies; since these qualities are but accidental to a human body. So in the case of clearing of debt, though, the borrower could not pay it, but in a great quantity of copper-money, and that advanced by little and little for a long time: which withal would ruin him: yet, if his rich cautioner should pay all at once, in a little gold; it is evident, it would be the payment of the same debt, providing only that it fully equalled the sum borrowed. Nay, confining our view to death itself, which is the general proper notion of the thing in question, let us put the case, that two men, equally guilty of the same crime, are laid under one and the same sentence of death; and it is execute on them both: but the one is by a miracle raised to life again, the other lies and rots in the grave. It is evident in this case, that the death they died, is the same death, answering the very same estimate which the law made of the crime; and that therefore the death of the former satisfies the law, as well as the death of the latter, so that it cannot reach his life again for that crime: howbeit, it is no less evident, that there is a huge difference

between the death of the one and the other, in accidentals, particularly in the duration or continuance of it. Wherefore, we conclude, that as Christ gave the same active obedience to the law which we should have given in virtue of the condition of the covenant of works; so he suffered the same punishment of death that we should have suffered in virtue of the penalty of that broken covenant: forasmuch as, whatever difference there was in accidentals, the essentials were the same; it being laid on him, in the new covenant, to suffer death for us, equalling the infinite offence arising from our sins, being fully proportionate to the estimate the law and justice of God had made of our crime.

And thus, according to what is said, two grand points were established in the conditionary part of the covenant.

1. "That the curse of the law due to us for our sin, should be transferred on him as the second Adam, our representative; whereby he should instantly be a man dead in law for his seed." Either he or they behoved to bear the curse: for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the law." Since God had annexed the threatening of death to his first covenant, saying, "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;" the truth of God secured the curse its taking place, as soon as sin should enter. Now, they were not able to bear it, without being ruined thereby. But that it might be borne, and they withal saved, it was provided, that he should be laid under it, in their room and stead; that as he was made sin for them, so he should also, in consequence thereof, be made a curse for them, Gal. iii. 13.

The curse is the sentence of the broken law passed upon a person, binding him over to the revenging wrath of God, to the full satisfaction of justice. So that awful and tremendous mystery lies here. Christ must stand before the tribunal of the holy law, as a sinner; answerable for all the sins of all the elect, by virtue of his bond of suretiship registrate in the records of heaven: and sentence must pass upon him, adjudging and binding him over to suffer all that revenging wrath which their sins deserved. The Lamb of God said, "Lo, I come:" so it was done, he was made a curse for us. In token hereof, being convened before the Jewish sanhedrim, he was judged a blasphemer, and worthy of death; and compearing before Pilate the Roman governor, he was by him sentenced to die, and that upon the cross.

Behold the stupendous result of this awful transaction, the transferring of the curse on Christ the second Adam! 1. Hereby he was made the separated one of the elect society, separated unto evil, as the immediate effect of the curse is described, Deut. xxix. 21. He

was made the devoted head, devoted to pay for all the rest. He was set up as the mark against which all the arrows of revenging wrath should be aimed. He was appointed to be the common receptacle of all the floods of vengeance, issuing from inconsed justice towards the whole body of the elect, to swallow them up; here the current of all these was turned, that they should together flow in upon him. Hence he cries, Psalm lxix. 2, "I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." 2. Hereby he became the resting-place of revenging justice, where it was to prey, till it should be satisfied to the full; Isa. liii. 10, "Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." In token hereof, when the officers came to apprehend him, he said, "If ye seek me let these go their way." Justice leaves the chase of the rebel-multitude, seeks him, and him only; since he was made a curse for them. Thus he was designed to be the sacrifice for all his seed, which the fire of revenging wrath should burn up, till it sent forth a sweet-smelling savour, a savour of rest to the incensed justice of an offended God.

2. Another grand point established here, was, "That the curse transferred on him, should be infinitely executed upon him as the second Adam, our representative; whereby he should die really for his seed, to the full compensation of all the injuries done to the honour of an infinite God, by all their sins." Vain is that curse which takes not effect: as the curse of the holy law was not causeless, so it could not miss of coming on, in its infinite weight, for the satisfaction of justice. Now, had it so come on them, they would have been eternally satisfying, but could never have ended their satisfaction. But coming on him, the church of God was purchased with his own blood, Acts xx. 28, and "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John i. 7, the infinite dignity of the person dying, making the execution of the curse on him unto death to be infinite in value, fully compensating the infinite wrong, according to the estimate made of it by law and justice.

And here it was settled and agreed, "That the curse should be executed on the whole man;" that being their due; and therefore that he should "become poor," and "not have where to lay his head," that he should suffer hunger, for want of meat; thirst, for want of drink: that his name and reputation should be sunk, loaded with vile reproaches and slanders; his very friends going about to lay hands upon him as a mad-man; that he should be accounted a worm and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people: his whole lot in the world afflicted, persecuted, and exceeding low; and that in end, being stripped of his garments, he should be hung up naked before the sun, between two malefactors, as if the worst of the three.

More particulary, here it was stipulated and agreed to,

1*st*, "That the curse should be executed on his blessed body;" forasmuch as their bodies were liable to it, as being instruments of sin and dishonour to God: that he should be hanged on a tree, that all the world might therein read the anger of God against the breaking of the first covenant, by eating of the forbidden tree; and his being made a curse for us, since it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree;" that the curse should go over, and death pass through, every part of that blessed body: that his head should be disgracefully wounded with a crown of thorns put upon it; his visage marred more than any man; his back given to the smiters; his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; his face not hid from shame and spitting; his tongue made to cleave to his jaws; his hands and feet pierced, nailed to a cross; all his bones drawn out of joint; his heart like wax, melted in the midst of his bowels; his blood shed; his strength dried up; and that in end it should expire and die, be separate from his soul, pierced with a spear, and laid in the dust of death.

2*dly*, "That it should be executed on his holy soul, in a special manner;" forasmuch as their souls were the principal actors in sin: that he should undergo the wrath of God in it, being all along his life a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and that towards the latter end, there should be an hour and power of darkness, wherein the malice of men, the power and rage of devils, should be jointly engaged against him, making their utmost efforts on him; and then the full floods of Heaven's revenging wrath should come rolling in upon his soul: that they should so overflow it, as to strike him with sore amazement, fill him with trouble, load him with heaviness, and overwhelm him with exceeding sorrow: that there should be such a pressure of divine wrath on his holy soul, as should put him into an agony, even to his sweating great drops of blood; and should bring over it a total eclipse of comfort, and as it were melt it within him; that so, while he was dying a bodily death on the cross, he might die also a spiritual death, such as a most pure and holy soul was capable of.

Here was the death determined in the covenant, for the second Adam our representative; a death in virtue of the curse transferred on him, long-lasting and exquisite, for the full satisfaction of revenging justice. (1.) It was long-lasting death. He was a-dying, in the style of the covenant of works, not only upon the cross, but all along the time of his life; the death that was the penalty of that covenant, working in him from the womb, till it laid him in the grave. Wherefore he behoved to be conceived of a woman of low

estate; and born in the stable of an inn, no room for him in the inn itself; laid in a manger, no cradle to receive him; his infant-blood shed in his circumcision, as if he had been a sinner; yea, his infant-life sought by a cruel persecutor, and his mother obliged to run her country with him, and go to Egypt. Returning, he behoved to live an obscure life in an obscure place, from which nothing great nor good was expected, John i. 46; and coming out of his obscurity, to be set up as the object of the world's ill-will and spite, obloquy and maltreatment, till by the hand of Jew and Gentile he was put to death on the cross. (2.) It was an exquisite death. No pity, no sparing in it: but the curse carried it to the highest pitch. No sparing from an angry God, Rom. viii. 32. No sparing from wicked men let loose on him, pushing him like bulls, roaring on him and devouring him like lions, and rending him like dogs, when once their hour and power of darkness was come, Psalm xxii. 12, 13, 16. Not a good word spoken to him in the midst of his torments, by those that stood by; but cruelly mocked and insulted by them. Much less a good deed done him. Not a drink of water allowed him, but vinegar offered him, in his thirst caused through the fire of divine wrath drinking up his spirits and moisture. Nay, the very face of the heavens was lowring on him: the sun must not give him its light, but wrap up itself from him in darkness; because "light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing to behold the sun."

Lastly, In this article it was established, "That he should suffer all this voluntarily, submissively, and resignedly, out of regard to the wronged honour of God." Accordingly, speaking of his life, he saith, "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself," John x. 18, compare Psalm xl. 6, 7, 8. This the law demanded of them whom he suffered for, condemning all murmuring and impatience, and binding them to obedience and suffering conjunctly. But how could they have so borne the load of revenging wrath, who cannot bear a sharp fit of the gout or gravel, without some degree of impatience in the eye of the holy law? Wherefore it was provided, that Christ, as their representative, should bear their punishment voluntarily, and with perfect patience and resignation: that he should go "as a lamb to the slaughter," quietly resigning his human will to the divine will; and make his obedience in his sufferings, as conspicuous as his sufferings themselves: that, in midst of the extremity of his torments, he should not entertain the least unbecoming thought of God, but acknowledge him holy in them all, Psalm xxii. 3: nor yet the least grudge against his murderers; in token of which, he prayed for them while he was on the cross, saying, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do," Luke xxiii. 34.

Thus far of the conditionary articles.

INFERENCES FROM THE CONDITIONARY PART OF THE COVENANT.

Thus, as we have shown, stood the important condition of the covenant of grace; and from thence the following inferences are fairly deducible.

Inf. 1. The redemption of the soul is precious. Is it not? Look to the price of the purchase, the ransom of souls, as stated in the covenant; the holy birth, righteous life, and satisfactory death of the Son of God; and ye must conclude it to be a costly redemption. Turn hither your eyes, (1.) Ye who value not your own souls. See here the worth of those souls ye sell for a thing of nought, for satisfying a corrupt passion, a pang of lust of one sort or another. Costly was the gathering of what ye thus throw away. Ye let them go at a very low price; but Christ could not have one of them at the hand of justice, but at the price of his precious blood. Ye cannot forego the vanities of a present world for them, nor spend a serious day or hour about them; but he, after a life-time of sorrows underwent a most bitter death for them. What think ye? Was he inconsiderate and too liberal in his making such a bargain for the redemption of souls? He was infinitely just, who proposed the condition; and he was infinitely wise, who went in to it. He was a Father that exacted this ransom for souls; and he was his own Son that paid it. Be ashamed and blush, to make so low an estimate of those souls, which Heaven set such a high price on. (2.) Ye who have cheap thoughts of the pardom of sin, and of salvation, correct your mistake here. You fearlessly run on in sin, thinking all may soon be set to rights again, with a God forgive me, have mercy on my soul; so as you may leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom. O fearful infatuation! Is the mean and low birth, the sorrowful life, and the bitter death of Jesus the Son of God, not sufficient to give men a just and honourable notion of the pardon of sin? Look into the condition of the covenant for pardon, written in the blood of the Lamb of God, and learn the value a just God puts upon his pardons and salvation. See, O sinner, that it is not words, but deeds; not promises and resolves to do better, but perfection of holiness and obedience; not drawing of sighs and shedding of tears, but shedding of blood; and not thy blood neither, but blood of infinite value, that could procure the pardon of sin, and salvation. And if thou have not upon thee by faith all that righteousness Christ fulfilled, to be presented unto God for a pardon, thou shalt never obtain it. Particularly, ye are apt to think light of the sin

ye were born in, and the corruption cleaving to your nature; but know, that God does not think light of these. It behoved to be an article of the covenant, that Christ should be born holy, and retain the holiness of human nature in him to the end; else the unholy birth and corrupt nature we derived from Adam, would have staked us all down eternally under the curse. (3.) Ye that have mean thoughts of the holy law, rectify your dangerous mistake by the help of this glass. Ye make no bones of transgressing its commands; ye neglect and despise its curse: as it is a law, ye shew not so much regard to it as to the laws of men; and as it is a covenant, ye look upon it as out of date, being in no concern how it may be satisfied for you. And shall the honour of the holy law lie in the dust, in your case? Rather than it should so lie in the case of Sodom and Gomorrah, God would have them laid in ashes with fire and brimstone. Yea, for vindicating the honour of the law, this whole world shall be burnt to ashes, and all the unholy cast out from the presence of the Lord for ever. And in the case of them that are saved, God would have the curse of the law executed upon his own Son as their Surety, and the commands of it perfectly obeyed in all points by him in their name. Sure, if you are possessed of any share herein, it will be great and honourable in your sight, as it is in the sight of God.

Inf. 2. The law is no loser, in that life and salvation are bestowed on believers in Christ. It is so far from being made void through faith, that it is established thereby, as the apostle witnesseth, Rom. iii. 81. God would never dispense his pardons at the expence of the honour of his law; nor declare one righteous, without the righteousness of the law being fulfilled, either by him, or in him by another, Rom. viii. 4. Wherefore, life and salvation being designed for the elect, the law's whole accounts of all it had to charge on them for life, were taken in; and an infallible method was laid down for clearing them, the burden of the payment being transferred on Christ their surety. By this exchange of persons the law had no loss. Nay, it was more for the honour of the law, that he was made under it, and satisfied it, in virtue of the claim it had upon him by the second covenant, than if they, being mere creatures, had satisfied it in all points. But the truth is, they being sinners, could never by any means have fully satisfied it; though it had eternally pursued them and exacted of them, it would never have had enough from them; whereas now, by Christ's taking their debt on him, it was paid to the utmost farthing.

Inf. 3. Faith hath a broad and firm bottom to stand on before the Lord. The believer hath a strong plea for life and salvation,

which cannot miscarry; namely, the condition of the covenant fulfilled by Jesus Christ, even all righteousness: Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus—let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith," Heb. x. 19—22. The broken boards of uncovenanted mercy, and men's own works, which presumption fixeth upon, cannot but fail, since the law admits no life for a sinner on these grounds. But forasmuch as there a gift of Christ and his righteousness proclaimed in the gospel is by the authority of heaven, he who by faith receiveth that gift, and makes the same his only plea before the Lord, cannot miss of salvation: Rom. v. 17, "They which receive (Gr. the) abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ;" where the abundance mentioned, relates not to different degrees of the grace or gift, but to the offence, as appears from ver. 20: As if he had said, "Who receive the grace and gift of righteousness which abound beyond Adam's offence saving them out of the gulf of ruin it plunged them into." Faith uniting a sinner to Christ the head of the second covenant, makes him partaker of Christ's righteousness, as really as ever his covenant-relation to Adam made him partaker of his guilt. So having all that Christ was, did, or suffered, for fulfilling the condition of the second covenant, to plead for life and salvation; it is not possible the claim can miscarry, justice as well as mercy befriending the plea of faith, as a righteous thing with God, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7.

Inf. 4. *lastly*, All who are in Christ the head of the covenant of grace, and so brought into it personally, are inherently righteous, or holy. For like as though Adam alone did personally break the first covenant by the all-ruining offence, yet they to whom his guilt is imputed, do thereupon become inherently sinful, through the corruption of nature conveyed to them from him; so, howbeit, Christ alone did perform the condition of the second covenant, yet those to whom his righteousness is imputed, do thereupon become inherently righteous, through inherent grace communicated to them from him by the Spirit. So teacheth the apostle in the forecited passage, Rom. v. 17, "For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." How did death reign by Adam's offence? Not only in point of guilt, whereby his posterity were bound over to destruction; but also in point of their being dead to all good, dead in trespasses and sins: therefore the receivers of the gift of righteousness must thereby be brought to reign in life, not only legally in justification, but also morally in sanctification, begun here, and perfected hereafter.

Accordingly, answerable to the three parts of the condition of the covenant of grace, undertaken and performed by the second Adam, to wit, holiness of nature, righteousness of life, and satisfaction for sin; there are three characters to be found in all capable subjects, who being personally brought into the covenant, have the righteousness of Christ upon them, and imputed to them.

Char. 1. They are all born again, and so made partakers of a new and holy nature: 2 Cor. v. 17, "Therefore," (namely, since he died for all, ver. 15,) "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Christ's being born holy, secured a holy new birth to them in him: so they are all new creatures, "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," Eph. ii. 10; new made in Christ, as sure as they were marred in Adam. And how can it be otherwise? Can a man be ingrafted in the true vine, and not partake of the sap and juice of the stock, that is, the Spirit and grace of Christ? No, surely: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. Or, can the Spirit and grace of Christ be in any, and yet no change made on their nature, but it still remain unrenewed? No, indeed: "If Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life, because of righteousness," ver. 10. Consider this, ye who pretend to rely on the righteousness of Christ, but are very easy in this point, whether ye are born again, or not; whether there is a holy nature derived from Christ to you, or not. Believe it, sirs, if it be not so, ye have no saving interest, part, nor lot in Christ's righteousness. Ye may on as good grounds pretend, that howbeit the guilt of Adam's sin was imputed to you, yet there was no corrupt nature derived from him to you; as pretend, that Christ's righteousness is imputed to you, while yet ye are not born again, your nature is not changed, by the communication of sanctifying grace from Christ, unto you. Deceive not yourselves; ye must be regenerate, else ye will perish: for "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," 1 John iii. 3.

Char. 2. They are all righteous and holy in their lives; Isa. lx. 21, "Thy people also shall be all righteous." Chap. lxii. 12, "And they shall call them the holy people." How did ungodliness, unrighteousness, and profanity, enter into the world, the which are now overflowing all banks? Was it not by one man, by Adam's sin, which is imputed to all mankind? Rom. v. 12. Then be sure, if the second Adam's righteousness be imputed to you, holiness of life will come along with it: 1 Cor. vi. 11, "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified." Does sanctification then go before justification? No: but it hath a necessary dependence on justification, and evidenceth it to the world, and to one's own con-

science. Unjustified, unsanctified; and unsanctified, unjustified. Did our blessed Saviour come into the world, and in our nature lead a holy righteous life, that men might live as they list? Nay, quite the contrary; even that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life," Luke i. 74, 75. If then Christ lived for you, assuredly ye shall live for him. Consider this, ye who are far from righteousness of life, living in the neglect of the duties either of the first or second table, or both. Your ungodly and unrighteous life declares you to be yet in your sins, under the curse, and far from righteousness imputed. There is indeed a righteousness of Christ; but alas! it is not upon you: ye are naked for all it, and stand exposed to revenging wrath.

Char. 3. The old man is crucified in them all: Gal. v. 24, "They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts." Therefore I say to you in the words of the apostle, Rom. viii. 13, "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." When our Saviour hung on the cross, he hung there as representative of all that are his, with all their sins on him by imputation, that the body of sin might be destroyed in his sufferings for it, Rom. vi. 6. He hung there as the efficient meritorious cause of their mortification, that by his death they might destroy the power of death in them; which appears not in any thing more, than in living lusts preying on their souls: Hos. xiii. 14, "I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues." See Tit. ii. 14; Rom. vi. 6, 7; Eph. v. 25, 26. And he hung there as the exemplary cause of their mortification; so that all who are his, and have sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, are likewise crucified and die to sin, after the similitude of his crucifixion and death; being crucified with him, Gal. ii. 20; planted together (with him in the likeness of his death, Rom. vi. 5; the fellowship of his sufferings making them conformable unto his death, Phil. iii. 10. Will ye then live after the flesh, not wrestling against, but fulfilling the lusts thereof; living in sin and to sin, instead of being mortified to it; and yet pretend that the satisfaction of Christ is imputed to you for righteousness? Truly you may on as good grounds say, that the blood of Christ shed for you, hath proven ineffectual; and that he hath so far missed of his aim and design in suffering for you; or that he died for you, that you might live in your sin without danger. These would make a blasphemous profession. Accordingly, your presumptuous sinful life and practice, is a course of practical blasphemy against the Son of God, making him the minister of sin; and evi-

denceth your pretensions to the imputation of his satisfaction to be altogether vain. Nay, of a truth, if ye have any saving interest in the death of Christ, your old man is crucified with him, Rom. vi. 6; and ye are dead with him, ver, 8; dead with him to sin, to the world, and to the law.

(1.) If ye have a saving interest in Christ's death, ye are dead with him to sin: Rom. vi. 10, "In that he died, he died unto sin once." Ver. 11, "Likewise also reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." While our Lord Jesus lived in the world, the sins of all the elect, as to the guilt of them, hung about him, and made him a "man of sorrows" all along; when he was upon the cross, they wrought upon him most furiously, stinging him to the very soul, till they killed him, and got him laid in the grave. Then they had done their utmost against him, they could do no more. So dying for sin, he died unto it, he was delivered from it: and in his resurrection he shook them all off, as Paul shook the viper off his hand into the fire, and felt no harm; rising out of the grave, even as he will appear the second time, without sin. Wherefore, if ye do indeed know the fellowship of his sufferings, if you really have fellowship with him in them, death will have made its way from Christ the head unto you as his members; his death unto sin cannot miss to work your death unto it also. If you are dead indeed with Christ, as ingrafted into him, sin hath got its death's wounds in you; the bond that knit your hearts and your lusts together, is loosed; and ye will be shaking off the viperous brood of them into the fire, in the daily practice of mortification. But if ye are not dead, but still living unto sin, it is an infallible evidence ye are none of the members of Christ: Rom. vi. 2, "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Ver. 3, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?"

(2.) If ye have a saving interest in Christ's death, ye are dead with him to the world: Col. iii. 1, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Ver. 3, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." The world hated him, and used him very unkindly while he was in it; and when he died he parted with it for good and all, John xvii. 11, "Now I am no more in the world—I come to thee." The quietest lodging that ever the world allowed him in it, was a grave: and coming out from thence, he never slept another night in it. He tarried indeed forty days in it after that; as many days as the Israelites' years in the wilderness; the former an exemplar, the latter a type of the Christian life, from conversion till the removal into the other world;

nevertheless he was dead to the world still; he conversed now and then with his own, but no more with the world. Now, if ye are his, ye are dead with him unto the world too, in virtue of his death; being crucified unto it, Gal. vi. 14. Union with Christ by faith lays sinners down in death, in Christ's grave; and so separates between them and the world for ever: and withal, it raiseth them up again with Christ into a quite new manner of life; no more that manner of life which they lived before their union with him, than that which Christ lived after his resurrection, was the manner of life he lived before his death: Rom. vi. 4, "We are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." If your title to heaven is indeed settled, by your receiving the atonement, now is your forty days before your ascension into it; now are ye no more of the world, although you be in it: your treasure and heart are no more there. Ye are no more indwellers in it, as natives: but travelling through it, as "strangers, coming up from the wilderness, leaning on the beloved," Cant. iii. 5.

(3.) *Lastly*, If ye have a saving interest in Christ's death, ye are dead with him to the law also: Gal. ii. 19, "I through the law am dead to the law." Ver. 20, "I am crucified with Christ." Our Lord Jesus took on our nature to satisfy the law therein: the whole course of his life was a course of obedience to it, for life and salvation to us; and he suffered to satisfy it in what of that kind it had to demand, for that effect: in a word, he was born to the law, he lived to the law, and he died to the law; namely, to clear accounts with it, to satisfy it fully, and get life and salvation for us with its good leave. He was "made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law," Gal. iv. 4, 5. And when once it fell upon him, it never left exacting of him, till it had got the utmost farthing, and he was quite free with it, as dead to it, Rom. vii. 4. In token whereof he got up the bond, blotted it out, yea, rent it in pieces, nailing it to his cross, Col. ii. 14. Now, Christ became dead to it, dying to it in his death on the cross: so that the holiness and righteousness of the man Christ did thereafter no more run in the channel in which it had run before, namely, from the womb to his grave; that is to say, it was no more, and shall be no more for ever, obedience performed to the law for life and salvation; these having been completely gained and secured by the obedience he gave from the womb to the grave. "Wherefore, my brethren," if ye be his, "ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ," which became dead to it on the cross, Rom. vii. 4. As ye will not be libertines in your life and practice, being dead to sin and the

world with Christ; so ye will not be legalists in your life and practice neither, being also dead with him to the law as a covenant of works. Your obedience will run in another channel than it did before your union with Christ, even in the channel of the gospel. Ye will serve in newness of spirit, in faith and love. The frowns of a merciful Father will be a terror to you to frighten you from sin; love and gratitude will prompt you to obedience. The grieving of the Spirit of a Saviour will be a spring of sorrow to you; and his atoning blood and perfect righteousness will be the spring-head of all your comfort before the Lord; your good works but streams thereof, as they evidence your saving interest in these, are accepted through them, and glorify God your Saviour. Ye will not continue to serve in the oldness of the letter, as before; at what time the law was the spring of all the obedience ye performed; fear of the punishment of hell for your sins, and hope of the reward of heaven's happiness for your duties, being the weights that made you go, though for all them you often stopped; your sorrows springing from your ill works, under the influence of the law allenarly; and your comforts from your good works, under the same influence; ye being alive to the law and dead to Christ. Rom. vii. 6, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." If by faith you wholly rely on Christ's righteousness, the holiness of his nature, the righteousness of his life, and his satisfaction for sin, how is it possible but ye must be dead to the law? for the law is not of faith, Gal. iii. 12. But if you perform your obedience for life and salvation, looking for acceptance with God on the account of your works, you go in a way directly opposite to the way of faith, and either altogether reject Christ's satisfying of the law, or else impute imperfection unto his payment of the bond. And "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace," Gal. v. 4.

Thus far of the first part of the covenant, namely the conditionary part.

The second part of the covenant, namely, the promissory part.

In every covenant, whether it be a proper or improper covenant, there is a promise. And in a proper covenant, the promissory part answers to the conditionary part; being an obligation which the party-covenanter to whom the condition is performed, comes under for some benefit to be bestowed in view of the performance of the condition. This is the promise of a proper covenant, binding on him who makes it, providing the party contracting with him do his

part. In every such case, where the thing is lawful and possible, it binds in point of truth and faithfulness, by virtue of compact: in some cases it binds also in point of remunerative justice; to wit, where the condition performed is properly equivalent to the benefit promised.

The covenant of grace, made between God and Christ as the head and representative of his spiritual seed, is a proper covenant. And in it there is a promissory part, answering to the conditionary part already explained: and it is God's part of the covenant, as the other was the Mediator's. Thereby God hath obliged himself to make the benefits therein condescended on forthcoming, upon the consideration of the performing of the condition. And forasmuch as the condition performed by Christ, was strictly meritorious of the benefits promised; the promises are binding and firm, not only in respect of the truth and faithfulness, but also of the justice of God.

Of what weight and importance the promissory part of the covenant is, will appear by the following considerations.

1. The covenant hath its name from this part of it, being called the covenants of promise, Eph. ii. 12. Covenants, because, though still in itself but one covenant, yet from its first promulgation in paradise, it was often renewed, as to Abraham, Jacob, the Israelites in the wilderness, and to David: and as oft as it was renewed it was renewed in a promise. The first covenant had a promise of life: yet it is not called a covenant of promise: on the contrary, the law, or that covenant, is opposed to the promise; though not in its use, yet in its nature, Gal. iii. 18, "If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise." For the law's promise of life was suspended on the condition of works, to be performed by men themselves: whereas in the second covenant, life and salvation are promised to sinners freely, for Christ's sake, without respect to any work of theirs as the condition thereof.

2. The covenant is described to us, by the Holy Ghost, as a cluster of free promises of grace and glory to poor sinners, in which no mention is made of any condition: Heb. viii. 10, "This is the covenant—I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." Ver. 11, "And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest." Ver. 12, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." These promises with their condition, having been proposed to, and accepted by Christ as second

Adam, and the condition performed by him; the covenant comes natively, in the gospel, to be set before us in them, to be by us received and embraced in and through Christ, by faith. Thus the promises are the covenant by way of eminency; even God's covenant, wherein he hath bound himself to perform his part, as the Mediator hath already performed his. And in this sense, indeed, the covenant of grace is not conditional, but consists of absolute promises; that is, promises become absolute, through the condition thereof actually performed already: but being considered in its full latitude, and in respect of Christ the covenant, and all the promises thereof, are properly and strictly conditional.

3. The promises of the covenant are the purchase of the blood of Christ; the fruit of his fulfilling all righteousness, in his birth, life, and death. As the curse came by the demerit of Adam's sin; so the promises are owing to the merit of Christ's righteousness; they are the new testament in his blood, 1 Cor. xi. 25. From the promise of the bread and water, (Isa. xxxiii. 16.), to the promise of a seat with him on his throne, (Rev. iii. 21.), they are all the purchase of his meritorious obedience even to death. Justly are they called exceeding precious promises, 2 Pet. i. 4, as being the price of his blood. Of what unspeakable weight and importance must they be, that cost such a price, between the Father and his own Son!

4. The great design and end of the covenant is accomplished in the performing of the promissory part thereof; and that is, the glory of God, and the salvation of sinners. The great glory to God, and grace to sinners, springing up from the whole of the covenant, meet together here, namely, in the accomplishment of the promises, as all the rivers meet together in the sea. The promises were the great thing the parties-contractors had in view, when they entered into the covenant: it was room for them the Father sought by his proposal of the covenant; and that was what the Son intended to purchase, by his fulfilling the condition. The condition of the covenant is the foundation of the promises; the promises the glorious superstructure reared upon that costly foundation. The administration of the covenant, is subservient to the accomplishment of the promises. The condition of the covenant was performed on earth, in the space of about thirty-three years; the promises have been a-performing more than five thousand years on earth, and will be a-performing in heaven, through the ages of eternity.

5. The happiness and comfort of all the elect, for time and eternity, depends upon the promises of the covenant. What keeps unconverted elect persons from dying in that state, and so dropping down to hell, but the promises of the covenant? What makes

grace overtake them, when they are fleeing from it, but the promise? What preserves grace in them, like a spark of fire in an ocean, that it is not extinguished, but the promise? And what is their security and comfort in the face of death, but the same promise? 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

6. The glory of the man Christ, as Mediator, depends on the promise of the covenant. This was the security, in the faith of which he lived on earth, about the space of thirty-three years, in a very low condition; and in end died an ignominious death: Psalm xxii. 4, "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them." He paid the price of the redemption of sinners, while as yet many of the redeemed were not born, nay nor as yet are; and several of them imbrewed their hands in his blood: but he rested on the promise of the covenant. He pleaded it when he was just entering into the swelling waves of death, where he was, like Jonah, to be swallowed up. John xvii. 5, "Now, O Father, glorify me with thyself." And in the faith of the accomplishment of the promise, he completed his performance of the condition: "for the joy that was set before him" in the promise, he "endured the cross, despising the shame," Heb. xii. 2.

7. *Lastly*, God hath sworn the promise of the covenant: "I have made a covenant with my chosen: I have sworn unto David my servant." The apostle tells us, that "God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath," Heb. vi. 17. A tender man will not swear a promise, but in a matter of weight. Of what unspeakable weight and importance then must the promise of the covenant be, which the God of truth hath confirmed with his oath?

Now, for clearing of this part of the covenant, we shall, 1. Consider the promises in general; and, 2. Take a more particular view of them.

OF THE PROMISES IN GENERAL.

As to the promises in general, two things are to be inquired into: 1. What are the general kinds of them? 2. To whom they are made?

I. As to the general kinds of the promises; considering the parties on whom the promises of the covenant of grace have their direct and immediate effect, they appear to be of two general kinds.

1. Some of them have their direct and immediate effect on Christ himself, the head of the covenant; such as the promise of assistance in his work, and the promise of a name above every name. So in the first covenant, there were promises which were to have their direct and immediate effect, on Adam himself, and looked not, but

mediately and indirectly, to his posterity, such of them, at least, as should have lived after the complete fulfilling of the condition of the covenant; namely, the promises of natural life continued in vigour and comfort, and of spiritual life in favour and fellowship with God, during the course of his probationary obedience.

2. Others of them have their direct and immediate effect on Christ's spiritual seed, comprehended with him in the covenant; such as the promises of regeneration, of the new heart, and cleansing from the defilement of sin. So in the first Adam's covenant, the promise of life contained a promise of the holy conception and birth of his natural seed; in respect of which the promise would have had its direct and immediate effect, not on Adam himself, but on his posterity.

II. The next thing to be considered, is, To whom they were made? And we may take up this point in two things.

First, The promises of the first sort, namely, those having their direct and immediate effect on the person of Christ, were made to Christ himself. Of this no doubt can be moved. And they were made to him as head of the covenant, the second Adam, the representative of his seed. This appears from our text, wherein he is called the Chosen, the head-elect, and representative of the election, David God's servant; in which capacity, the covenant was cut off, or made to him, by the Father. It is evident, that all the promises of assistance in his work, and of his subequent reward, were made to him in view of his performance of the condition: and therefore since he performed the condition, as head of the covenant, second Adam, and representative of his seed, these promises were made to him in that capacity.

The promises of this kind then were made to Christ only. And that was the peculiar honour put upon the head of the covenant, in the promissory part; as it was his peculiar burden to fulfil the conditionary part. So he hath the name which is above every name, and is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. In the election, whereof he is the head, he shines above the rest, as the sun in his meridian brightness above the twinkling stars. He is the Benjamin at God's table with his brethren, whose mess of promises in the covenant is five times so much as any of theirs; the Joseph, who was separated from his brethren, in fulfilling the condition of the covenant, and hath a double portion in the promised land made over to him, as the first-born amongst many brethren.

Nevertheless, as the honour and prosperity of the head redound to the members, their interest, in respect of their union and communion, being a joint interest; so the glory and honour settled on

Christ by promise, are a spring of grace and glory to his members, an enriching treasure, their glory and crown. He is that head of gold which puts a glory on the body: and the ointment poured upon the head, cannot miss to go down to the skirts of his garments. And hence is, (1.) The continual cry of prayer by the whole company of the faithful, for the accomplishment of the promises made to the Mediator, Psalm lxxii. 15, "Prayer also shall be made for him continually." It is evident that psalm concerns the Messias. But prayer made continually for Christ! how can that be? Why, till the world's end, that cry in prayer shall never cease among the faithful, Thy kingdom come, Matth. vi. 10. It began with Adam's embracing the promise by faith, was carried all along the time of the Old Testament; and now it hath been sounding in the New Testament church more than sixteen hundred years, and shall not cease until the consummation of all things. (2.) Hence also the joyful acclamations of praise, by the same company, for the accomplishment of promises to the Mediator. Whensoever there appears any such accomplishment made, it is matter of joy to the church; and the more there appears of it, the joy is the more increased. Thus the church hath a song upon the fulfilling of the promise of the gathering of the nations unto him, Isa. xii. 1; of this victory over Antichrist, Rev. xix. 1; of the calling of the Jews, ver. 6. And when, the end being come, all the promises made to him shall be accomplished, that will afford them an everlasting song of praise.

Secondly, The promises of the other sort, namely, those having their direct and immediate effect on the elect, are made to Christ primarily, and to them secondarily: first, to the head; then, to the members, through him.

1. The promises having their immediate effect on the elect, are made to Christ immediately, primarily, and chiefly. God hath in the covenant promised grace and glory, all that pertains to life and godliness, unto a select company of mankind: but the promise of all these was first and chiefly made to Christ their head; so that he hath not only an interest in these promises, but the chief interest in them. This appears by several documents from the word of God.

1*st*, The apostle testifies, that the promises were made to the seed, which is Christ, Gal. iii. 16. And the promises he speaks of, are, promises of the blessings, of the Spirit, ver. 14; of the inheritance, ver. 18; the promises received through faith, ver. 14. Even these are made to Christ the head of the body. This is confirmed by those passages which shew God's covenant to be made with Christ, and in the meantime explain it by a promise of the happiness of his seed, Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4; ver. 28, and 29, ver. 35, and 36. And what is

more natural, than to make a promise to a father in favour of his children?

2*dly*, Our Lord Jesus is constitute the heir of all things, (Heb. i. 2.), in virtue of the promise of the covenant, "I will make him my first-born," Psalm lxxxix. 27. Now, if Christ, as the second Adam, be heir of all things, by his Father's promise, the promises of all things are made to him; and, consequently, the promise of eternal life, comprehending all happiness to his people, is made to him in the first place. So Christ is the first and chief heir; and they are secondary heirs in and through him. Hence, in view of the great promise of the covenant, "I will be their God," our Saviour hath that endearing expression, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God," John xx. 17, compare Rom. 17, viii. "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

3*dly*, As in the covenant of works, God promised life to Adam's natural seed; upon condition of his perfect obedience; which is evident from death's coming on them by his disobedience: so in the covenant of grace, he hath promised life to Christ's spiritual seed, upon condition of his obedience; for "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," 1 Cor. xv. 22. But that promise of life for Adam's natural seed, was primarily made to Adam himself, while as yet none of them were in being; and they were to partake of it only through him, to whom it was made as their representative. Therefore the promise of life to Christ's spiritual seed, was made chiefly to Christ himself; and to them only in and through him. Accordingly we are told, that the promise of eternal life, upon which the hope of believers is built, was made before the world began, Tit. i. 2. And to whom could it be then made immediately and primarily, but to Christ the head of the covenant?

Lastly, These promises contain a part of the reward made over in the covenant to Jesus Christ, "who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross," Heb. xii. 2. A great part of which joy lay here; "He shall see his seed, the travail of his soul," Isa. liii. 10, 11. All of these promises were the price of his blood to him, the purchase of his obedience and death; therefore called the New Testament in his blood. To whom could the reward be chiefly promised, but to him who, performing the condition, wrought the work? Unto him therefore it was of debt, namely in virtue of the promise, which made it due to him upon his performing the condition. The blessings of the covenant which come on the elect, are certainly to be considered as a reward to Christ, as well as a free gift to them. And considering them in the first of these views, there is no

more absurdity in the promise of the new heart's being made to Christ, than in a physician's making a promise to a father to cure his lame child, when he hath given him security for his fees: in which case, the child cannot look on the promise as made to himself at all, but secondarily, through his father, who was the party-contractor.

This is a point of considerable weight, and serves both to inform our minds, and direct our practice; for the following inferences from it are native.

(1.) The promises of the covenant are not made to the believer's good works; but to Christ's works, and to the working believer in him. Unto the believer they are absolutely free, and not of debt; and therefore are not made to his works; for "to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt," Rom. iv. 4. There is indeed a comely order of the promises, whereby the promise of purity of heart to the elect, goes before the promise of their seeing God in heaven; the promise of humiliation, before that of lifting up; whereupon it is declared in the administration of the covenant, that the pure in heart shall see God; that they who humble themselves, shall be lifted up: and thus "godliness hath promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," 1 Tim. iv. 8. But the foundation of all these promises, whether of things that are our duty, or our privilege, what they all depend upon as their proper condition, is the obedience of Christ allenarly; they being all made to him in the first place, the latter as well as the former.

(2.) The first grace whereby the dead elect are quickened, and made to believe and unite with Christ, is conveyed to them in the channel of a promise, as well as the grace following faith: Ezek. xxxvi. 27, "I will put my Spirit within you." For although in their natural state they are not capable of a believing pleading of the promise; nor have they, at that time, a personal saving interest in the promises; yet the Lord Jesus knoweth them that are his, and for whom the promises were made to him; and having the administration of the covenant in his own hand, he cannot fail of seeing to the accomplishing of them, in the appointed time. Howbeit they, being dead in trespasses and sins, cannot consult their own interest; yet he having the chief interest in the promises, will not neglect his own cause, but will see them exactly accomplished.

(3.) The way to be personally and savingly interested in the promises, for time and eternity, is to unite with Christ by faith; "for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen," 2 Cor. i. 20. Would ye fain know how the great and precious promises may

become yours? Why, they are all his; they are all made to him. Take him, and they are yours: even as he who marries the heiress, hath a right to her portion, and all the bills and bonds wherein any of it is contained.

(4.) When through deadness and darkness of spirit, whether arising from some conscience-wasting guilt, or otherwise, your faith of the promise is failed, and you cannot again fasten your gripe upon it, because you can see no good in you; embrace Christ again, and the promise in him; notwithstanding of your seen and felt sinfulness and utter unworthiness; and by no means stand off from the promise until you be in better case; but say with the Psalmist, "Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away," Psalm lxv. 3. For as the goodness in you was not the ground of the promise; so the evil in you doth not overturn it, and make it of none effect. The foundation of the promise stands sure in Christ, whatever alterations the frame and case of a believer's spirit do undergo. It is established as the moon, (Psalm lxxxix. 37.), which is still the same in itself, notwithstanding of the variety of its appearances to our sight, one while waxing, at another time waning.

(5.) The true way to plead the promises, is to come to God in the name of Christ, and plead the fulfilling of them to us for his sake: John xvi. 23, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." Matt. xxi. 22, "Believing, ye shall receive." Dan. ix. 17, "O our God,—cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake." To ask in Christ's name, believing, is to present one's self before the Lord, as a member of Christ, joined and cleaving to him offered unto us in the gospel; and for the sake of the head, to implore the free favour of the promise, relying on his merit for obtaining it. This is the import of that passage, Gen. xii. 3, as it relates to Christ, "In thee shall all families of the earth," to wit, that shall be blessed, "be blessed;" or rather, as the original word properly signifies, be made to kneel, namely, to receive the blessing; all that are blessed, being blessed in Christ, Eph. i. 3. Compare Phil. ii. 10. This is the method in which God dispenseth the favours of his promise: 2 Sam. vii. 21, "For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things." Compare 1 Chron. xvii. 19, "For thy servant's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all this greatness;" *i. e.* for the sake of the word, thy servant, the Messias: for as both these passages are a narration of the very same thing, there is no manner of difference at all between them in the original, save that where the one hath thy word, the other hath thy servant.

(6.) Believers may hereby strengthen their faith of the accomplishment of the promises to them. Whatever easy work some have, in maintaining their presumptuous hopes of the mercy of God to eternal life; while not seeing the heinous nature of their sin, they build their hopes on something in themselves, rather than upon the free promise of the covenant in Christ Jesus; yet unto the serious godly, no small difficulty in believing doth arise, from the joint view of the greatness and preciousness of the promises, and the greatness of their sins and of their unworthiness. Hence they are ready to say, Can ever such promises be made out to such a one as I am? And truly there is nothing in them that can furnish an answer to this grave case. But here is a satisfying answer to it: The promises are all of them made to Christ chiefly, even to him who purchased them with his blood; and justice requires that they be performed to him: and being performed to him, they must needs have their effect on all his members, for whom, because in themselves unworthy, he merited them. So the soul may say, However unworthy I am, yet He is worthy for whom God should do this.

2. The promises having their immediate effect on the elect, are made to themselves secondarily, in and through Christ. As he hath the fundamental and chief interest in them, so they have a derived interest in them through him. There was from eternity a legal union between Christ and them in the covenant; whereby their debt became his, and the promises made to him became theirs. As upon the one hand, "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isa. liii. 6; so, on the other hand, "grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Tim. i. 9. In time there is a real mystical union made between him and them, upon his taking possession of them by his Spirit, and dwelling in them by faith. The former constituted a right for them unto the promises, in Christ the head; the latter vests them with a right thereto, in their own persons, through him; as being actual members of his body. In respect of the one, eternal life is said to be promised, and grace said to be "given us, before the world began," Tit. i. 2; 2 Tim. i. 9; in respect of the other, believers are called "the heirs of the promise," Heb. vi. 17; "partakers of his promise in Christ," Eph. iii. 6; and the "promise is given to them that believe," Gal. iii. 22.

Thus it appears, that these promises are made to Christ's spiritual seed, as well as to himself; though primarily to him as the representative, on whom the fulfilling of the condition was laid; and but secondarily to them as the represented, who were to receive the benefit. And hence ariseth another difference, namely, that, properly and strictly speaking, the promises were conditional to Christ, but

they are absolute and free to us; even as the promise of life, in the first covenant, was conditional to Adam, which would have been absolute to his natural seed, the condition once being fulfilled. Thus Christ's merit and the free grace of God, meet together in the covenant: justice is fully satisfied, and grace runs freely, in that channel; the promises being all purchased at the full rate, but no part of the price advanced by us. Hence we obtain precious faith, with all other saving benefits, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, (or rather, the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ), as the proper condition of them all, 2 Pet. i. 1. And in the meantime, God "blotteth out our transgressions for his own sake," Isa. xliii. 25; and "all things that pertain unto life and godliness, are given (or gifted) unto us," 2 Pet. i. 8.

OF THE PROMISES PECULIAR TO CHRIST.

HAVING spoken of the promises in general, we come now to take a more particular view of them; and first of the promises peculiar to Christ himself. These are many, but may all be reduced to three heads; to wit, the promise of assistance, of acceptance, and of reward of his work.

First, Our Lord Jesus had a promise of assistance in his work: Psalm lxxxix. 21, "Mine arm shall strengthen him." Having undertaken the work of our redemption, he had his Father's promise, that when it came to the setting to, he would strengthen and uphold him in going through with it, Isa. xlii. 1.—4. And in the faith of this covenanted assistance, he went through the hardest pieces thereof, chap. l. 6, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Ver. 7, "For the Lord God will help me." Accordingly, in his heaviness in the garden, "there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him," Luke xxii. 43. And this promised assistance was the token of his Father's good pleasure in, and liking of the work, while it was a-doing.

Secondly, He had a promise of the acceptance of his work when once done; of the acceptance thereof, as a full discharge and performance of the condition of the covenant, intitling him to the promised reward. Hence in view of the sure performance of his work the acceptance thereof was, at his baptism, proclaimed by "a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matth. iii. 17. And it was renewed at his transfiguration, a little before his passion, chap. xvii. 5. Unto this promise of acceptance belongs the promise of his resurrection, and of his justification.

1. The promise of his resurrection from the dead: Psalm xvi. 10, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption;" which is expounded of the resurrection of Christ, Acts ii. 31. God, by raising Christ from the dead, did in effect declare his acceptance of the work by him performed. It evidenced the debt to be fully cleared, that he who laid him up in the prison of the grave, did bring him out of it again; sending his angel to "roll away the stone from the door" of it, and so to dismiss him legally. For thus it was agreed in the covenant, that as Christ should give himself to the death, for the satisfaction of justice: so the Father should bring him again from the dead, in respect of that satisfaction made by his blood, Heb. xiii. 20.

2. The promise of his justification: Isa. l. 8. "He is near that justifieth me." The accomplishment of which is observed by the apostle, 1 Tim. iii. 16, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit." Our Lord Jesus Christ having no personal sins to be pardoned, needed no personal justification; but as he was the surety of the elect, and had the iniquities of them all laid on him, it was provided in the covenant as just, that, the work he had undertaken being performed, he should have an official justification. Having paid the debt, he had by promise a full and ample discharge thereof, under the hand and seal of heaven. And here lies the great security of his people against the law's demand of satisfaction from them.

Lastly, He had a promise of a glorious reward to be conferred on him, as a proper merit of his work done, there was a joy set before him in the promise, for which he endured the cross, despising the shame, Heb. xii. 2. Never was there such a work wrought; and never was there such a reward promised. Unto it there belongs a fivefold promise.

1. The promise of a new kind of interest in God, as his God and and Father: Psalm lxxxix. 26. "He shall cry unto me, thou art my Father, my God." Our Lord Jesus had God to his Father, by eternal birth-right: but there was a new relation constituted between God and Christ as the second Adam, head of the covenant, founded upon his undertaking and fulfilling the covenant condition; whereby he became heir of God as his heritage, according to that of the apostle, Rom. viii. 17, "Heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;" namely, with Christ as the primary heir. For by his obedience unto death, he purchased the enjoyment of God as a God and Father. I do not say, he purchased it for himself; the man Christ needed not to do that, forasmuch as he had it, in virtue of the personal union of the two natures: but he purchased it for sinners, who had lost all saving interest in God, but could not be happy without it.

2. The promise of a glorious exaltation, to be the Father's honorary servant, prime minister of heaven, as great administrator of the covenant: Isa. lii. 13, "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." Chap. xlix. 8. "I will give thee for a covenant of the people." In fulfilling the condition of the covenant, he took upon him the form of a bond-servant, and humbled himself even unto the death of the cross: wherefore God also, according to the promise of the covenant, hath highly exalted him to the prime ministry of heaven, and given him a name as great administrator of the covenant, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, Phil. ii. 7. 8, 9, 10. The nature, vast extent, and importance of this promise, will afterwards be unfolded, when we come to treat of the administration of the covenant, in virtue thereof put in the Mediator's hand.

3. The promise of a seed and offspring, numerous as the stars of heaven: Isa. liii. 10, "He shall see his seed." Gen. xv. 5, "So shall thy seed be;" namely, "as the stars of the sky in multitude," Heb. xi. 12: even the whole multitude of the elect, all of them to live by his death, and to bear his image, as a child doth that of his father. He consented to suffer the pangs of death; but they were travailing pains, to issue in a numerous birth. He was as a corn of wheat to fall into the ground, and die; but the promise secured to him, on that condition, his bringing forth much fruit, John xii. 24. It is in pursuance of the accomplishment of this promise, the gospel continues to be preached from age to age; forasmuch as, in virtue thereof, "as many as are ordained to eternal life, shall believe."

4. The promise of his inheriting all things, as primary heir; Psalm lxxxix. 27, "I will make him my first-born." So the apostle says, God hath appointed him heir of all things, Heb. i. 2. And Christ himself declares his being put in possession accordingly, Matt. xi. 27, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." Thus he hath by promise suitable treasures for the supporting of the dignity conferred on him. But of this also more afterwards.

5. *Lastly*, The promise of victory and dominion over all his, and his people's enemies: Psalm lxxxix. 23, "I will beat down his foes before his face." He was to encounter with Satan, sin, and death, in the quarrel of the designed heirs of glory; and no sooner was he engaged against them, but the wicked world of men began a war with him too: but he had his Father's promise, for victory and dominion over them all: that, howbeit he should get the first fall, and die in the battle, yet his death should be the destruction of Satan's dominion, sin's power, and death's bands over his people;

and that whosoever should go about to support that tottering interest, should fall under him: Psalm cx. 1, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

And thus far of the threefold promise peculiar to Christ himself, in the covenant.

OF THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE TO THE ELECT, CONSIDERED IN THREE PERIODS.

THE promises common to the elect, made in and through Christ unto them in the covenant, are also many. A particular enumeration of them I intend not, though every one of them is more precious than the gold of Ophir: but it would be profitable for serious Christians, as they read through the Old and New Testament, to mark them in their bibles, for their spiritual treasure, stored with such variety, as affords what is suitable for every case they can be in. They are all comprehended in, and may be reduced unto this one, to wit, the promise of eternal life: for which the two following texts may be viewed.

Tit. i. 2, "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

1 John ii. 25, "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."

In which words, three things for our purpose offer themselves to be observed. 1. The great and comprehensive promise of the covenant of grace, the sum of all the promises therein, to sinners; namely, the promise of life eternal: that is the order of the words in the original. The covenant is a covenant of life, designed for restoring dead sinners to life: and so the promise of it is a promise of life. And that life is eternal. 2. The date of this promise, before the world began. While as yet time was not, and the foundation of the world was not laid, it was made, and eternal life thereby secured to the elect. 3. The parties concerned in it. The maker of the promise was God that cannot lie; whose promise therefore must needs take effect. And, by special appropriation, it was the Father: it was HE that made it: ver. 24, "Ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father." Ver. 25, "And this is the promise that he hath promised us," &c. The party it was made to, is, (1.) and chiefly, Jesus Christ, the second Adam, head of the covenant: for there is no necessity to recede from the proper signifition of the word here used, which is promising, to a catachrestical

one, to wit, purposing: since the promises were made to Christ, Gal. iii. 16. And he really was before the world began, and consequently then capable of having a promise made to him. (2.) The elect in him. He hath promised us, namely, us legally in him before the world began; that is the elect who apply and plead the promise then, when they believe.

And hence ariseth this truth, viz. The great and comprehensive promise to Christ's spiritual seed, in the covenant, is the promise of life eternal, made from eternity to Christ, and to them in him.

For opening of this promise of the covenant, we shall view it, (1.) More generally, (2.) More particularly.

I. In the general, it speaks two things, to wit, all true happiness and the everlastingness of that happiness.

First, It comprehends, as the matter thereof, all true happiness. For life is used for happiness in the holy language, 1 Sam. xxv. 6. So John iv. 50. And it is so used in the style of both covenants: Rom. x. 5, "The man which doth those things, shall live (*i. e.* be happy) by them." Hab. ii. 4, "The just shall live (*i. e.* be happy) by his faith." The damned have a life in hell that will last for ever: but, in the style of the Holy Ghost, they never see life, they are deprived of eternal life; because their life is not a happy life, but a miserable one. It is evident from the writings of the prophets and apostles, that the death threatened in the covenant of works, comprehended all misery, in this world and in the world to come; and, consequently, that the life therein promised, comprehended all happiness in time and eternity. Forasmuch then as the life promised in the covenant of grace, was designed for retrieving the loss sinners sustained by the fall; it must needs, in its comprehension, go as wide as the death which thereby they became liable unto. From all which we conclude, that God, in promising life to the elect in Christ, hath promised them all happiness: which accordingly goes under the name of life simply in the Scripture, 1 John v. 12, "He that hath the Son, hath life." And thus the covenant-life extends to all welfare of the whole man, and to all the means by which it is compassed.

1. The covenant-life extends to all welfare of the whole man, soul and body; the latter as well as the former. And therefore from the covenant our Lord proves the resurrection of the body, against the Sadducees, Matth. xxii. 31, 32. Though the soul is the principal part, it is not the only part, therein provided for. In virtue of the covenant, "the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body;" as well as the soul is for him, and he for it, 1 Cor. vi. 13. As the body had its share in the death threatened in the first cove-

nant; so it hath, and shall have its share in the life promised in the second. Since the price of the Redeemer's blood was paid for the bodies of his people, in his fulfilling the condition of the covenant; the life secured in the promise must extend to them, as well as to their souls.

2. It extends to all the means by which that welfare is to be compassed, begun, advanced, and perfected: "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. For the securing of the benefit itself by promise, secures all the means by which it is to be brought about. Hence the covenant descends even to the bread and the water, necessary for the support of natural life, Isa. xxxiii. 16.

Secondly, The promise comprehends the everlastingness of that happiness. It is not only life that is promised, but life eternal, life for evermore, Psalm cxxxiii. 3; which, from the moment it is given, shall never be extinguished, through the ages of time and eternity. In the style of the Scripture, eternal life is not restricted to the state of glory in heaven. But the life communicated to a sinner, in the first moment of his union with Christ, is eternal: it is the eternal life promised in the covenant, according to the Scripture, John iii. 36, "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life." See chap. v. 24; 1 John v. 11, 12. Hence, from the promise of the covenant, "The just shall live by faith," the apostle proves the perseverance of the saints, Heb. x. 38. A plain evidence, that perseverance in grace, in this our state of imperfection, is a part of the eternal life promised in the covenant, as well as heaven's happiness. And thus the covenant-life extends to that which now is, and that which is to come, 1 Tim. iv. 8.

1. It extends to the life that now is in the world. And this is that eternal life begun in the several parts thereof, with respect both to soul and body. If men measure happiness by the smiles and frowns of common providence, no man indeed can be counted happy before death. But the sacred oracles teach us to take our measures of it another way, to wit, by a personal saving interest in the covenant; and do pronounce them happy, whose God is the Lord, whatever be between them and the grave, Psalm cxliv. 15. So there is promised in the covenant, happiness begun in this life, both as to soul and body; the happiness of the way to the kingdom; salvation happily begun, and infallibly to be carried on.

2. It extends to the life that is to come in the other world. And that is the same eternal life consummated and perfected, in respect both of soul and body, in heaven. There the promise of the cove-

nant is to receive its full accomplishment; of which believers now have the earnest, which is not only a part of the things promised, but an assurance of the whole.

II. For a more particular view of the promise of eternal life to the elect, it may be considered in three periods: (1.) Before their union with Christ; (2.) From their union with Christ, until death; and, (3.) From death, through eternity. Of the operation of the promise, in the first and the last of these periods, we know but little; and indeed not much of it, in the middle period. For it is like a river issuing from a hidden spring, and running far under ground; then rising above ground, and running on, till it go forth into the ocean. The hidden spring from whence the promise of eternal life to the elect issueth forth, is God's free grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began, 2 Tim. i. 9. It runs under ground, undiscernible even to the parties themselves, till the moment of their union with Christ, in effectual calling; then rising, it runs on, as it were, above ground, in visible streams, until death; and thereafter, it runs full and perspicuous through the ages of eternity. We shall take a view of the great lines of the promise, in these its several periods.

PERIOD I.

BEFORE UNION WITH CHRIST.

If we consider the promise of eternal life to the elect, as standing in the covenant, and as accomplished to them, and having its effect on them, before their union with Christ, we may perceive two great lines in it; namely, a promise of their preservation, and a promise of the Spirit. Of which in order.

I. THE PROMISE OF PRESERVATION.

The promise of eternal life to the elect, in the covenant, comprehends a promise of their preservation, till the happy moment of their spiritual marriage with Jesus Christ, wherein they shall be settled in a state of grace: Ezek. xvi. 6, "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live." *Heb.* "I said to thee, Live in thy blood;" as several approven versions do read it. In this

illustrious passage of scripture is shewed, under the similitude of an exposed or outcast infant, the natural state and wretched condition in which God found Israel, and finds all the elect; the former being a type of the latter. There is a twofold passing by this wretched out-cast, and these at two very distant times, intimated by the Holy Ghost. The first, on the day she was born and cast out, ver. 4, 5, 6. The second, after she was grown, and become marriageable; at what time she was actually married, vers. 7, 8. The former refers to the time of the elect's coming into the world in their natural state, not only as born into it, but as beginning to act in it as rational creatures; the latter, to the time prefixed in the eternal purpose, when, by means of the law in the hands of the spirit of bondage, their breasts, as it were, are fashioned, in the work of conviction; upon which ensues their spiritual marriage with Christ. But how is the out-cast preserved in the interval, that she perisheth not in her wretched condition? Why; though no hand was laid upon her, yet a word was spoken, which secured her life in a case naturally deadly. At the first passing by her, in the day she was born and cast out, God said to her, "Live in thy blood:" that is, "Notwithstanding that thou art lying in the open field, in thy blood, thy navel not dressed, so that, according to the course of nature, thy blood and spirits must quickly fail, and this thy birth-day must be thy dying-day; yet I say unto thee, Live: thou shalt not die in that condition, but grow up in it, being preserved till the happy moment of the designed marriage." And this is the promise of the elect's preservation in their natural state. And it hath two great branches; one respecting their natural life; another respecting their spiritual death. The

First is a promise of the continuation of their natural life, till such time as they be made partakers of life in Christ Jesus. God has said it; they shall live, though in the blood of their natural state. So it is not possible they should die before that time, whatever dangers they are brought into; even though a thousand should fall at their side, and ten thousand at their right hand; for, by the promise of the covenant, there is an unseen guard about them, to defend them. It is in virtue hereof, that all along during the time they are in that state, they are preserved, whether in the womb, or coming out of it, or in all the dangers of infancy, childhood, youth, or whatsoever age they arrive at therein. This is it that, so long as they are unconverted, doth so often bring them back from the gates of death; returning them in safety, when either by diseases, or other accidents, they are past hope in their own eyes, and in the eyes of friends and physicians. Though the elect thief was, in his

natural state, nailed to the cross; yet death had no power to come at him, so as to separate his soul from his body, till such time as he was once united to Christ by faith, and made partaker of a new life in him. The

Second is a promise of keeping the grave-stone from off them in their spiritual death. The grave-stone is the sin against the Holy Ghost, the unpardonable sin; which, on whomsoever it is laid, makes their case, from that moment, irrecoverable, that thenceforth they can never rise from spiritual death to life: Mark iii. 29, "He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness." But although the elect in their natural state, being dead in sin as well as others, may, through the activity of reigning and raging lusts, so rot in their graves, as to be most abominable in the eyes of God and all good men; yet, because of the promise of the covenant, it is not possible that that grave-stone should be laid on them. There is an invisible guard set on their souls, as well as on their bodies: and so it is infallibly prevented, as may be learned from that expression of our Saviour, Matt. xxiv. 24, "Insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very elect." While they are Satan's captives, he may drive them to a prodigious pitch of wickedness. So did he with Manasseh, and Paul: but, as far as he had carried them, he could not carry them forward that step.

This promise of the elect's preservation, as it is with the rest founded on the obedience and death of Christ; whereby eternal life was purchased for them, and consequently these benefits in particular, failing which they would be ruined for ever: so it is akin to, and seems to be grafted upon the promise of assistance made to Christ in the covenant; by which a divine support was insured to him, during all the time the sins of the elect, and the wrath of God for them, should lie upon him. And at this rate, the case of the head, and of the members, was jointly provided for in the covenant.

II. THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT.

THE promise of eternal life to the elect, comprehends also a promise of the Spirit of life to be communicated to them, and each one of them, at the nick of time, prefixed in their cases respectively, in the eternal council; that is, the time appointed to be the time of love, the dawning of the day of grace to them, however long and dark their night may be. This promise is found, Isa. xliv. 3, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed." Ezek. xxxvi. 27, "I will put my Spirit within you." The elect of God being, even as the rest of mankind, dead in sin, through the breach of the first covenant, could not

be recovered, but through a communication of the Spirit of life to them: but that Spirit they could not have from an unatoned God. Wherefore, in the covenant, Christ undertook to fulfil all righteousness in their name, thereby to purchase the Spirit for them; upon which was made the promise of the Spirit, the leading fruit of Christ's purchase; called therefore the Father's promise by way of eminency, Luke xxiv. 49. In token hereof the great outpouring of the Spirit was at Christ's ascension; when he, as our great High Priest, carried in the blood of his sacrifice into the most holy place not made with hands, Acts ii. For as the fire which was set to the incense on the golden altar, the altar of incense was brought from off the brazen altar, the altar of burnt-offering in the court of the temple; so the Spirit which causeth dead sinners to live, issueth from the cross of Christ, who suffered without the gate.

Now, of the promise of the Spirit there are two chief branches; namely, the promise of spiritual moral life, and the promise of faith.

1. The promise of spiritual moral life, in virtue whereof the soul morally dead in sin, is raised to life again, through the Spirit of life communicated unto it from heaven. This is the beginning, the very first of the eternal life itself promised in the covenant. It is the lighting of the sacred lamp of spiritual life in the soul, which can never be extinguished again, but burns for evermore thereafter. This promise we have, Isa. xxvi. 19, "Thy dead men shall live." And it belongs to the promise of the Spirit; as appears from Ezek. xxxvii. 14. "And shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live."

The effect of it is the quickening of the dead soul, by the Spirit of Christ passively received: Eph. ii. 5, "When we were dead in sins (God, ver. 4.) hath quickened us." This is the same with the renewing in effectual calling, whereby we are enabled to embrace Jesus Christ, mentioned in our Shorter Catechism on that question. And it is fitly called by some divines, the first regeneration, agreeable to the style of the holy Scripture: John i. 12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" ver. 13. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Sinners in their natural state lie dead, lifeless, and moveless; they can no more believe in Christ, nor repent, than a dead man can speak or walk: but, in virtue of the promise, the Spirit of life from Christ Jesus, at the time appointed, enters into the dead soul, and quickens it; so that it is no more morally dead, but alive, having new spiritual powers put into it, that were lost by Adam's fall.

2. The other chief branch of the promise of the Spirit, is the promise of faith; to wit, that Christ's spiritual seed shall believe in him, come unto him, and receive him, by faith: Psalm cx. 3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power;" and Psalm xxii. 31, "They shall come." God hath promised, that, upon the shedding of the blood of his Son, for the satisfaction of justice, there shall spring up in the earth, after that costly watering, a plentiful seed, to the satisfying of his soul, Isa. liii. 10. And therefore, whoever they be that believe not, all those who were represented in the covenant, shall infallibly be brought to believe, as our Lord himself upon the credit of this promise, doth declare, John vi. 37, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me." Now, this also belongs to the promise of the Spirit; who is therefore called the Spirit of faith, 2 Cor. iv. 13, as being the principal efficient cause thereof, Zech. xii. 10.

The effect of this promise is actual believing, produced by the quickening Spirit in the soul, immediately out of the spiritual life given to it by the communication of himself thereto: John v. 25, "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God;" compared with chap. i. 12, 13; 2 Cor. iv. 13. As receiving Christ passively, the sinner that was spiritually dead, is quickened; so being quickened, he receives Christ actively. Christ comes into the dead soul by his Spirit: and so he is passively received; even as one, having a power to raise the dead, coming into a house, where there is none but a dead man; none to open the door to him, none to desire him to come in, nor to welcome him. But Christ being thus received, or come in, the dead soul is quickened, and by faith embraceth him; even as the restorer of the dead man to life, would immediately be embraced by him, and receive a thousand welcomes from him, who had heard his voice and lived. When Christ, in the womb of his mother, entered into the house of Zacharias, and she saluted Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptist, he, the babe in Elizabeth's womb, leaped as at the entrance of life: so doth the soul, in actual believing, at Christ's coming into it by his Spirit. As God breathed into the first man the breath of life, and he became a living soul, who was before but a lifeless piece of fair earth; that is, God put a spirit, a soul, into his body, which immediately showed in the man's breathing at his nostrils: so Jesus Christ, in the time of loves, puts his Spirit into the dead soul, which immediately shews itself alive, by believing, receiving and embracing him, known and discerned in his transcendent glory. And thus the union betwixt Christ and the soul is completed; Christ first apprehending the soul by his Spirit; and then the soul thus apprehended and quickened, apprehending him again in the promise of the gospel by faith.

Now, the promise of the Spirit, in both branches thereof, is granted upon the promise of a resurrection from the dead, made to Christ; and it is so interwoven therewith, that there is no separating of them. The promise of the resurrection, like the oil on Aaron's head, runs down to the skirts of his garments, in the promise of quickening his members too. Herein the Scripture is very plain, Isa. xxvi. 19, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." Eph. ii. 5, "Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Our Lord Jesus, in the eternal covenant, became the head of a dead body, to wit, of the body of elect sinners dead in sin; and that to the end he might restore it to life. And being legally united with that body, that so death might have access to spread itself from it unto him in *due* time, he had the promise of a resurrection, both for himself and his members, made unto him. The appointed time being come, death drew together its whole forces, and made an attack upon the head of the body, which alone remained alive. It stung him to the heart upon the cross, and laid him too in the dust of death: and so it had them all dead together, head and members. Thus the condition of the covenant was fulfilled. Now, the promise comes next, in its turn to be fulfilled, particularly the promise of a resurrection: namely, that, death having exhausted all its force and vigour on the head, he should be raised again from the dead; and that as death had spread itself from the members into the head, so life, in its turn, should spread itself from the head into the members, they together with his dead body arising. It was in virtue hereof, that the spirit or soul that animated Christ's body, and which he yielded up upon the cross, (Matth. xvii. 25,) shewed by his breathing out his last there, (Luke xxiii. 46, Gr.) was returned again into his blessed body; whereupon he came forth out of the grave. And it is in virtue of the same, that the Spirit of life returns into the dead souls of the elect again; upon which they live and believe. The time of the return of the Spirit, both into the head and into the members, was prefixed in the covenant, respectively; so that as it was not possible Christ should be held in the grave after three days; even so it is not possible that the elect should be held in the bonds of spiritual death, after the time prefixed for their delivery: Hos. vi. 2, "After two days will he revive us, in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

And thus the promise of eternal life to the elect works in this dark period of their days; which dark period ends here. It appears now, and runs above ground ever after.

PERIOD II.

FROM UNION WITH CHRIST, UNTIL DEATH.

CONSIDERING the promise of eternal life to the elect, as it is accomplished to, and hath its effect on them, from their union with Christ until death; the great lines to be perceived therein, are the promises, 1. Of justification; 2. Of a new and saving covenant relation to God; 3. Of sanctification; 4. Of perseverance; and, 5. Of temporal benefits. Of the which in order.

I. THE PROMISE OF JUSTIFICATION.

THE promise of eternal life to the elect, comprehends the promise of justification, to be conferred on them, and each one of them, being united to Christ through the Spirit. This is found Isa. liii. 11, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many," Chap. xlv. 15, "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified." It is the leading promise of this period: and the effect of the accomplishment thereof, is, that the soul, legally dead under the sentence of the law, or curse of the broken covenant of works, is caused to live again accordingly; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith," Rom. i. 17. And this is the beginning of that life which is received from Christ by faith, and is mentioned John v. 40, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Chap. vi. 57, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." There is a life received from Christ before faith, whereby one is enabled to believe; of which we have already spoken: and there is a life received from Christ through faith, according to John xx. 31, "That believing ye might have life through his name." And this last is, according to the Scripture, eternal life too: chap. v. 24, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

The elect of God, lying under the breach of the first covenant, were dead in law, as being under the curse. They could not be restored to life in the eye of the law, but upon the fulfilling of the righteousness of the law; the which they not being able to do for themselves, Christ in the covenant undertook to do it for them; and thereupon was made the promise of their justification. This promise taking effect upon their believing, the curse is removed, and they are actually and personally justified. Thus they are restored to life

in the eye of the law: which kind of life received by faith, is everlasting; forasmuch as, according to the covenant, the curse can never return upon them, for shorter or longer time: Isa. liv. 9, "As I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee."

Of the promise of justification there are two branches; namely, the promise of pardon, and of acceptance.

1. The promise of pardon of sin, whereby the guilt of eternal wrath is done away: Heb. viii. 12, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." The sins of the elect being, in the eternal covenant, imputed to, and laid on Christ; who becoming legally one with them, transferred their debt on himself, and undertook to pay the same; a promise was thereupon made of pardon to them, and each one of them. Now, as soon as they are mystically and really united to him by faith, by means of that union they have communion with him in his righteousness: whereupon his perfect satisfaction is imputed to them; and, upon the account of it alone, and not any deed of theirs whatsoever the free promise is accomplished, and the pardon actually bestowed on them, according to the eternal agreement: Eph. i. 7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Here is life from the dead; a pardon put into the hand of the condemned man, disarming the law of its condemning power, and death of its sting, as to him: causing him to lift up his head from off the block, and go away with acclamations of praise of the King's mercy, and his Son's merit. And it is eternal life: for all his sins past, present, and to come, are pardoned, as to the guilt of eternal wrath; a formal remission of these of the two former kinds being granted, and a not imputing of these of the latter sort, as to that guilt, being secured; as the apostle teacheth, Rom. iv. 7, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." Ver. 8, "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." And God will never revoke his pardons, chap. xi. 29, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

2. The other branch of the promise of justification, is the promise of acceptance of their persons as righteous in the sight of God; according to that, Isa. xlii. 21, "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake." Compared with Matth. iii. 17, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and Eph. i. 6, "He hath made us accepted in the beloved." A holy righteous God, whose judgment is according to truth, cannot accept sinners as righteous, without a righteousness, even a perfect righteousness. They that

are truly righteous in law, can never pass for righteous, but for unrighteous in the view of his piercing eye: "For in thy sight," says the Psalmist, Psalm cxliii. 2, "shall no man living be justified;" to wit, "by the deeds of the law," or inherent righteousness, which is imperfect, as the apostle expounds it, Rom. iii. 20. But our Lord Jesus having in the covenant undertaken to fulfill all righteousness for them, who of themselves could fulfil no righteousness; a promise was thereupon made, to accept them as righteous upon the account of his surety-righteousness, which becomes truly theirs through faith, and that by a double right. (1.) By right of free gift received: inasmuch as Christ's righteousness being made over, in the gospel, as Heaven's free gift to sinners, the gift is by faith actually claimed and received; whence it is called the GIFT of righteousness, (Rom. v. 17,) revealed unto faith, (chap. i. 17.) namely, to be believed on, and so received. (2.) By right of communion with Christ: inasmuch as sinners being united with him by faith, have thereby communion, or a common interest with him in his righteousness, Phil. iii. 9, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ." Upon these grounds, the holiness of Christ's nature, the righteousness of his life, and the satisfaction made by his death and sufferings, being the constituent parts of that righteousness, are, according to truth, imputed to the believer, or legally reckoned his: and, upon the account thereof precisely, he is accepted of God as righteous, being "made the righteousness of God IN HIM," 2 Cor. v. 21; the righteousness of God being "UPON all that believe," Rom. iii. 22.

Here is life to the soul, righteousness unto justification of life, chap. v. 18; an everlasting righteousness, Dan. ix. 24; a garment that never waxeth old, is never rent, nay, nor sullied; but always continues in its original lustre, from the moment that it is put on. Wherefore the life must needs be ETERNAL, grace must needs reign through that "righteousness unto eternal life," Rom. v. 21; for being once put on, is never put off again for one moment, in time nor eternity.

Now, the promise of justification, in both branches thereof, is grafted upon the promise of justification made to Christ. The condition of the covenant being fulfilled, the head is justified, according to the promise; and then the members in him. First, the Mediator gets up his discharge for the whole debt; and then they, pleading it by faith for their own behoof, are discharged in their own persons.

II. THE PROMISE OF A NEW AND SAVING COVENANT-RELATION TO GOD.

The promise of eternal life to the elect, doth also comprehend the

promise of a new and saving covenant-relation to God, which they, and each one of them, being justified, shall be brought into: Hos. ii. 23, "I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God." Dying both morally and legally, through the breach of the first covenant, they fell under a relative death too; whereby the blessed relation between God and them was dissolved: and it could not be constituted again, while they lay under the condemnatory sentence of the law. But upon Christ's undertaking, in the covenant, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, the price of the redemption of all saving benefits, this promise was made. Wherefore they being come to Christ by faith, united with him, and justified through his righteousness, which they partake of in him; God meets them there, even in Christ the appointed meeting-place; and there, with the safety of his honour, he takes them by the hand, and joins them again in a saving relation. Thus they have a relative life, according to that, Psalm xxx. 5, "In his favour is life." The which life is eternal: forasmuch as the relation is for ever indissoluble; the bond of the second covenant being so much surer than the bond of the first, as the second Adam's undertaking was surer than the first Adam's.

Now, of this promise there are three chief branches; namely, the promise of reconciliation, of adoption, and of God's being their God.

1. The promise of reconciliation between God and them: Ezek. xxxvii. 26, "I will make a covenant of peace with them, it shall be an everlasting covenant." They were by sin in a state of enmity with God; on their part, there was a real enmity against God; on God's part, a legal enmity against them, such as a judge hath against a malefactor, whom notwithstanding he may dearly love. But Jesus Christ having undertaken, in the covenant, to expiate their guilt, by the sacrifice of himself, the Father made a promise of peace and reconciliation with them thereupon. Hence we are said to be reconciled to God by the death of his Son, Rom. v. 10; inasmuch as by his death and sufferings he purchased our reconciliation, which was promised on these terms.

Now, this promise is accomplished to the justified sinner: being pardoned, he is brought into a state of peace with God, as saith the apostle, Rom. v. 1, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." God lays down his legal enmity against him, never to be taken up again. And more than that, he takes him into a bond of friendship; so that he is not only at peace with God, but is the friend of God: James ii. 23, "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God."

This promise is grafted upon the promise of acceptance and justification made to Christ. For his sacrifice being accepted as well pleasing to God, and he discharged of the debt he became surety for; the reconciliation, as well as the pardon, of those united to him by faith, natively follows thereupon: 2 Cor. v. 19, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Eph. i. 6, "He hath made us accepted in the beloved." Ver. 7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins."

2. Another branch of this promise, is the promise of their adoption into the family of God: Hos. i. 10, "It shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God." And this is more than the former; as it is more to be one's son, than to be his friend. We have before declared, how all mankind was, by the first covenant, constituted God's hired servants; and by the breach of that covenant, bond servants under the curse: and how Christ transferred that state of servitude of his spiritual seed on himself. Now, upon consideration of his taking on him the form of a bond servant for them, the promise of their adoption into the family of God was made. He was "made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons," Gal. iv. 4, 5.

And being justified by faith, and reconciled to God, it is accomplished to them: forasmuch as then Christ's service is imputed to them, and a way is opened withal for their admission into the family of God, through their actual reconciliation to him: Rom. v. 1, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Ver. 2, "by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." John i. 12, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." Then are they taken as children into the family of heaven: God becomes their Father in Christ; and they his sons and daughters, to abide for ever in his house, John viii. 35. And so they have a right to all the privileges of that high relation.

Now, this promise is grafted upon the promise made to Christ of a new kind of interest in God as his Father; according to that, John xx. 17, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father." For by the Spirit of adoption we call God our Father, in the right of Jesus Christ our elder brother, spiritual husband and head.

3. The last branch is the promise of God's being their God: Heb. viii. 10, "I will be their God." This is more than reconciliation and adoption: it is the height of the relation to God, which a sinful creature could be advanced unto. They were by nature without God, Eph. ii. 12: but forasmuch as the Son of God did, in the cove-

nant, undertake to give himself for them, in their nature perfectly to satisfy the law, in his holy birth, righteous life, and exquisite death; a ransom of infinite value, quite beyond all created things whatsoever, graces, pardons, heavens; there was made, upon that consideration, a promise of God's giving himself to them, as the adequate reward of that service; which being performed by the Mediator, this reward was purchased for them. Hence God saith to Abraham, Gen. xv. 1, "I am thy exceeding great reward."

Now, to the believer being justified, reconciled, and adopted into the family of God, this heritage falls, in accomplishment of this promise, Rom. viii. 17, "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God." Gal. iv. 7, "And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ;" God himself being the heritage. He becomes their God: they have a right to him, and are possessed of him, as their own property; a property which the thought of men and angels cannot fully reach the contents of. Not only are all the works and creatures of God, in the heavens, earth, and seas, theirs, 1 Cor. iii. 22, "All are yours;" but himself is theirs: which is more than all that, as the bridegroom is more than all the marriage-robes, or his large possessions. All the attributes are theirs; his infinite wisdom to direct them, his power to afford them protection, his justice to make all the benefits purchased by Christ for them forthcoming to them, his holiness to transform them into the same image, his mercy to pity and succour them, his grace to deal bountifully with them, his faithfulness to fulfil all the promises to them in their time, and his all-sufficiency to render them completely happy. He is theirs in all his relations; their Shepherd, Provisor, Protector, King, Husband, Head, and whatever may contribute to their happiness. All the persons of the glorious Trinity are theirs: the Father is theirs, the Son is theirs, and the Holy Spirit is theirs: Isa. liv. 5, "For thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts is his name:" (Heb.) "Thy makers are thine husbands; Jehovah Sabaoth is his name."

This rich promise is grafted upon the promise made to Christ of a new kind of interest in God as his God: John xx. 17, "I ascend to my God and your God." God being the Mediator's God by purchase, he becomes our God in him. Christ having performed the condition of the covenant, falls heir to the great heritage; and we fall to it also in him, being heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ, Rom. viii. 17.

III. THE PROMISE OF SANCTIFICATION.

In the promise of eternal life to the elect, is comprehended in like

manner the promise of their sanctification: Ezek. xi. 19, "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:" ver. 20, "That they may walk in my statutes." See Joel iii. 17, 21; Heb. viii. 10. Through the breach of the first covenant they lost the image of God: their whole faculties were so depraved, that they could neither do, speak, nor think any thing truly good, and acceptable to God: they were by nature altogether unholy; unclean, loathsome, and abominable, in their nature, heart, and life. And it was quite beyond their power to make themselves holy again: for mending of their nature could not affect it; it behoved to be renewed, Eph. iv. 23. And the curse of the law lying upon them extinguished all saving relation between God and them; and so blocked up all saving communication with heaven: for it barred, in point of justice, all sanctifying influences from thence; these being the greatest benefit they were capable of, as assimilating the creature unto God himself, or rendering it like him. The curse fixed a gulf betwixt God and them, so that sanctifying influences could not pass from him unto them; more than their unholy desires and prayers could pass from them unto him. So the fallen angels always were and the damned now are, beyond all possibility of sanctification, or of receiving sanctifying influences from heaven; there being no remedy to remove the curse, neither from the one, nor from the other. And in this case all Adam's posterity had lain for ever, had not Jesus Christ, as the head of the elect, undertaken in the second covenant to remove that bar, to fill up that gulf, and to found a new saving relation between God and them, through his own obedience and death. But upon that undertaking of the Mediator, the Father did by promise insure their sanctification; that Christ's people should be willing in the day of his power, in the beauties of holiness, Psalm cx. 3; and that a seed should serve him, Psalm xxii. 30.

And this promise, the promise of sanctification, is indeed the chief promise of the covenant made to Christ for them: among the rest of that kind, it shines like the moon among the lesser stars. Sanctification is the very chief subordinate end of the covenant of grace, standing therein next to the glory of God, which is the chief and ultimate end thereof. The promise of it, is the centre of all the rest of these promises. All the foregoing promises, the promise of preservation, the Spirit, the first regeneration or quickening of the dead soul, faith, justification, the new saving relation to God, reconciliation, adoption, and enjoyment of God as our God, do tend unto it as their common centre, and stand related to it as means to their end. They are all accomplished on sinners, on design to make them holy. And all the subsequent promises, even the promise of glorifi-

cation itself, are but the same promise of sanctification enlarged and extended: they are but as so many rays and beams of light, shooting forth from it as the centre of them all.

This appears from the scriptural descriptions of the covenant, in the promissory part thereof respecting the elect: Luke i. 73, "The oath which he sware to our father Abraham." Ver. 74, "That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies might serve him without fear," ver. 75, "In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life." Here is the oath or covenant sworn to Abraham, as a type of Christ; wherein his seed's serving the Lord in holiness, is held forth as the chief thing sworn unto the Mediator by the Father; and their deliverance from their enemies, as the means for that end. See Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12, where God's writing his law in their hearts, is set on the front, as the first thing in the divine intention, though the last in execution, as appears by comparing the 10th and 12th verses. This matter is also evident from the nature of the thing. For the great thing Satan aimed at in seducing our first parents, was the ruin of the image of God in them, that so mankind might be no more like God, but like himself: and the mystery of God, for the recovery of sinners, is then finished, when holiness is brought in them to perfection in heaven, and not till then.

From all which one may plainly perceive, that the sanctification of all that shall see heaven, is secured in the covenant, upon infallible grounds, beyond all possibility of failure: and that the unholy have no saving part nor lot in the covenant; and that the less holy any man is, the less is the covenant-promise accomplished to him. For the sanctification of sinners is the great design of that contrivance: it is that which the Father and the Son, looking therein to them, had chiefly in their view: and the promise thereof is the capital promise of the covenant, respecting them; being as it were written in great letters.

Now, at the time appointed for every one in the eternal council, this promise is accomplished. The sinner being justified by faith, and taken into a saving relation to God, being reconciled, adopted, and made an heir of God through Christ, is sanctified. The bar being removed, the gulf filled up as to him, his saving interest in, and relation to a holy God being established; the communication between heaven and the sinner is opened, and sanctifying influences flow amain, to the sanctifying of him throughout.

This is, by some divines, called the second regeneration, agreeable to the Scripture: Tit. ii. 5, "He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" compared with Eph. v.

26, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water." 2 Cor. v. 17, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" namely, being "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," as the apostle himself explains it, Eph. ii. 10. And as in regeneration taken strictly for the quickening of the dead soul, and called the first regeneration, new vital powers are given; so in regeneration taken largely for the forming of the new creature in all its parts and distinct members, which is called the second regeneration, there are new qualities and habits of grace infused: and it is the same with the second renewing, mentioned in our Shorter Catechism, on the head of sanctification, "whereby we are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God."

The matter lies here. The sinner being by faith united to Christ, through the communication of the quickening Spirit from Christ unto him, and thereupon justified, reconciled, adopted, and made an heir of God; there is a measure of every grace, even the seeds of all saving graces, derived from, and communicated out of all-fulness of grace in the man Christ the head, unto the sinner as a member of his, by the same Spirit dwelling in the head and members. Hereby the man is not only a spiritually living creature, but an all-new creature, sanctified wholly or throughout, renewed in the whole man, after the image of God. For the immediate effect of that communication of grace from Christ, must be the sealing of the person with the image of Christ; forasmuch as he receives grace for grace in Christ, as the wax doth point for point in the seal. So that the restored image of God is expressed on us immediately from Christ the second Adam, who is the image of the invisible God: even as Eve was made after God's image, being made after Adam's, according to Gen. ii. 18, "I will make him an help meet for him;" marg. as before him, that is, in his own likeness, as if he sat for a picture. Compare 1 Cor. xi. 7, "He," (to wit, the man) "is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man." Ver. 8, "For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man." And 2 Cor. viii. 23, "Our brethren are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ." And thus our uniting with Christ, through the Spirit, by faith, issues in our becoming one spirit, that is, of the same spiritual holy nature with him; as really as Eve was one flesh with Adam, being formed of him, of his flesh and of his bones, Gen. ii. 23; to which the apostle alludes, in the matter of the mystical union between Christ and believers, Eph. v. 30, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."

This is the scripture-account of the matter: according to which, the sanctification of a sinner hath a special relation to Jesus Christ

and his Spirit; depends withal on our relative state in the divine favour; and so is no less a mystery than our justification. As the depravation of human nature hath always been so manifest, that it could not escape observation in the world; so, in all ages, men have been aiming to discover and compass the cure thereof, in a right use they apprehend they could make of their rational faculties. The issue whereof hath always been, at best, but an outward show and semblance of sanctification, going under the name of moral virtue, having no special relation to Jesus Christ, and his indwelling Spirit; but such as it is, made the foundation of men's relative state in the favour of God. And since the world by their wisdom knew not God; it is not at all strange, the produce of their wisdom, in the matter of sanctification, or assimiliation to his image, lies so wide of the true sanctification acceptable to him discovered in his word. Truly it is there only we can learn the mystery of the sanctification of a sinner. And there it is revealed, that that great work is wrought by the Spirit, on the souls of men in a state of union with Jesus Christ, and after believing, Eph. i. 13, "In whom also AFTER that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy SPIRIT of promise." It necessarily depends on our union with Christ, in that we are sanctified IN Christ Jesus, as members of his body, 1 Cor. i. 2, created IN Christ Jesus unto good works. And faith is the instrumental cause of our sanctification, being, We are sanctified by faith, Acts xxvi. 18: for thereby it is, that "of his fulness we receive grace for grace," (John i. 16.) the which is communicated to us by his Spirit, who glorifies him, by reforming us after his image, by means of that communication of grace from Christ unto us: John xvi. 14, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." So "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord (Christ), we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18. Thus one being in Christ is made a new creature; forasmuch as he is such a stock as changes the graft into its own nature; "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, chap. v. 17, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ," Gal. iii. 27. It dependeth also upon our justification, and reconciliation with God; inasmuch as the blood of Christ, with which we are sanctified, according to the scripture, (Rev. i. 5; 1 Pet. i. 2; 1 John i. 7,) is effective of our sanctification, as it is the meritorious cause thereof: and so the sanctifying virtue of that precious blood, proceeds from its atoning virtue; it sanctifies us, because it justifies and reconciles us to God; Heb. ix. 14, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered

himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" Wherefore, saith the apostle, 1 Thess. v. 23, "And the very God of PEACE sanctify you." In like manner, it pre-supposeth our adoption; inasmuch as it is upon our being adopted into the family of God, that we receive the Spirit of his Son, conforming us to his image as our elder brother, which is the very thing wherein our sanctification doth consist: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren," Rom. viii. 29. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father," Gal. iv. 6, "We are changed into the same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord," 2 Cor. iii. 18. And it stands in the same relation to God's becoming our God, Ezek. xvi. 8, "I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine." Ver. 9, "Then washed I thee with water: yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and anointed thee with oil."

But although in this work of sanctification, there is communicated out of the all-fulness of grace in Christ, a measure, and that a predominant measure of every grace: yet it is not a full measure of any grace. Hence it comes to pass, that howbeit we are thereby renewed in the whole man, yet we are still unrenewed in the whole man too; to wit, in respect of two general parts, thence called the renewed part, and the unrenewed part. For this communication of grace, being of grace for grace in Christ, we are thereby renewed in every particular part indeed: but the measure of none of these graces being full in any soul while here, we are not wholly renewed in any such part; but there are remains of corruption still indwelling in every such part, in the mind, will, and affections, and in the body by way of communication with the unrenewed part. Thus two contrary principles, to wit, grace and corruption, are in the sanctified; being together in such sort, that in every particular part where the one is, the other is there also by it: even as in the twilight, light and darkness are in every part of the hemisphere. All which the scripture doth abundantly declare. For what we have of this gracious work upon us, while here, is but in part; it is not perfect, 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10. Though there is a new man put on, there is an old man to be put off, Eph. iv. 22, 24. There is flesh as well as spirit in the best, Gal. v. 17; who therefore do look forth but as the morning, Cant. vi. 10; or as the word properly signifies, as the dawning: yet, as the dawning differs from dark night, they differ thereby from the unsanctified, in whom there is no light, Isa.

viii. 20. (Heb. no dawning.) See Rom. vii. 14—24. Phil. iii. 21.

Howbeit, forasmuch as it is a predominant measure of every grace that is thus communicated: this work of sanctification doth issue in a state of death unto sin, and a state of life unto righteousness.

1. It issueth in a state of death unto sin, or in mortification. For by means of that communication of grace from Christ the head, though it is not full, the OLD man of sin gets his deadly wound. The reigning power of the whole body of sins is destroyed: inasmuch as a reigning principle of grace is thereby set up in the believer; and that "his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God," 1 John iii. 9. "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." And total pollution, or defilement, through sin, is by the same means purged off; inasmuch as the restored image of God makes one really and personally pure and clean in the sight of God, as far as it goes: Tit. iii. 5, "He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Compare Col. iii. 10, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him." And thus one is put into a state of death, in respect of his unrenewed part, Col. iii. 3, "For ye are dead; Rom. vi. 11, "dead indeed unto sin." The which state of death is such as a crucified man is in, who being nailed to the cross, shall never come down till he have breathed out his last; Gal. vi. 14, "The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Rom. vi. 6, "Our old man is crucified with him."

2. It issueth also in a state of life unto righteousness, or in vivification. For by means of the same communication of grace from Christ the head, one is endued with infused habits of grace, the immediate principles of gracious actions: the law is written in his heart; and his heart is circumcised to love the Lord. And thus he is put into a state of life unto righteousness, in respect of his renewed part; being "dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi. 11. So saith the apostle of himself: Gal. ii. 20, "I am crucified with Christ: Nevertheless I live." And this state of life is such, as a man is in for the common actions of life, who is not only quickened, but risen and come forth of the grave; Col. ii. 12, "Ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God." Rom. vi. 4, "That like as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." And it is an eternal life; for the grace communicated from Christ to the believer, for that effect, "shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life," John iv. 14.

Now, this death unto sin, and life unto righteousness, spring from

our communion with Christ in his death and resurrection. These last have in them a power and virtue to render his mystical members conformable to him in them. They have a power and virtue, to cause in them a dying unto sin, as Christ died for sin, a violent death, lingering, and painful, yet voluntary; and a rising from sin to a new manner of life, continued during their abode in this world, and perfected in glory; even as he rose from the dead to a new manner of life, continued till his ascension: Philip. iii. 10. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." Rom. vi. 4, "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Ver. 5, "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death: we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Since there is in Adam's sin and death, a malignant virtue, conforming his natural offspring unto him therein, to their defilement; why should it be thought strange, that there should be such a benign virtue in the death, and resurrection of Christ the second Adam, conforming his mystical members unto him therein, to their sanctification? for "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," 1 Cor. xv. 22. The death and resurrection of Christ have this virtue, inasmuch as he died and rose again as a public person, and merited this conformation of his mystical members to his image, Rom. vi. 4.—12, Eph. iii. 5. 6. And they have this effect, as they are applied to us by the Spirit. For the case of our justification and sanctification, is much like that of the delivering one who is a prisoner for debt. When the surety's payment of the debt is legally applied to the prisoner, by the judge sustaining it as clearing his debt; in the moment of that application, the prisoner is legally free; he is no more a prisoner in point of right, though still in the prison, until that one sent by the judge, apply it to him really by opening the prison-doors to him, and setting him at liberty. Even so the death of Christ, and his resurrection, considered as the evidence of his complete satisfaction, being legally applied by God the Judge, to a sinner, upon his believing; they have an immediate effect on him, constituting him in a happy relative state, in justification, and new relation to God as his Friend, Father, and God; so that he is thereby free, even from the dominion and pollution of sin, in point of right, as well as he is in fact freed from the guilt of it: he is by that application legally dead unto sin, and alive unto God: Rom. vi. 10, "For in that he" (to wit, Christ) "died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." Ver. 11, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead

indeed unto sin; but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Now, the curse which stood as a legal bar to sanctifying influences, in respect whereof the strength of sin is the law, 1 Cor. xv. 56, being thus quite removed by the legal application, of the death and resurrection of Christ to the believer; the Spirit doth really apply the same death and resurrection to him, conforming him personally thereto, through the communication of grace to him, out of the fulness of grace in Christ the head; without which there cannot be any such conformation, according to the stated method of grace revealed in the scripture. And thus they have a mediate effect on him, constituting him really and personally holy, in sanctification: Rom. viii. 2, "For the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Col. ii. 12, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him." 1 Cor. xii. 13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." John xv. 4, "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me." There was a double sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifices, called the blood of the covenant, Exod. xxiv. First, it was sprinkled on the altar, for atonement and reconciliation with God for Israel, ver. 6. And next, it was sprinkled on the people, for their purification, ver. 8; its purifying virtue flowing from its atoning virtue. Accordingly there is a double application or sprinkling of the blood of Christ, thereby signified: one for our justification and reconciliation with God; mentioned Heb. xii. 22, "Ye are come"—Ver. 24,—"to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel," namely, in that it speaks for mercy and pardon, whereas Abel's spoke for vengeance: and then another, for our sanctification; mentioned, 1 Pet. i. 2, "Through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." And this is the only true sanctification of a sinner, having a special relation to Jesus Christ and his Spirit.

Now, the branches of the promise of sanctification are manifold: for it spreads as wide as the commandments of the holy law, which, in the station it hath in the gospel-covenant, are all turned into promises. Thus whereas the command is, "Know the Lord;" the promise is, "They shall all know me, saith the Lord," Jer. xxxi. 34. The command is, "Come unto me," Matt. xi. 28; and it is promised, "They shall come," Psalm xxii. 31. The command is, "Love the Lord," Psalm xxxi. 23; it is promised, "The Lord will circumcise thine heart to love the Lord," Deut. xxx. 6. It is the command, "Fear God," 1 Pet. ii. 17; and it is promised, "I will put my fear in their hearts," Jer. xxxii. 40. We are commanded to be

meek, humble, and lowly, Matt. xi. 29; and it is promised, Isa. xi. 6, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,—and a little child shall lead them." And thus it is in all other cases, the whole commandments of the law in this station being inlaid with the gospel-promises, as appears from Heb. viii. 10, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people."

But the chief branches are these two; to wit, the promise of repentance, and the promise of actual grace and strength for all holy obedience.

1. One chief branch of the promise of sanctification, is the promise of repentance. Not that legal repentance, which goes before saving faith, being common to the elect and reprobate; but that evangelical repentance, which is described in our catechisms, the seeds of which are said, in the Larger Catechism, to be put into the heart in sanctification; and so follows saving faith and justification, in the order of nature: Ezek. xxxvi. 31, "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities." Psalm xxii. 27, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord." Zech. xii. 10, "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him." The whole spiritual seed were, by means of the breach of the first covenant, lost sheep, even as others. Adam left them as so many waifs and strays, wandering on the mountains of vanity, ready to become a prey to the roaring lion, who goes about there, seeking whom he may devour: Isa. liii. 6, "All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way." All of them had lost the way, and none of them could find it again. They had gone away from God, and could not return. They had turned to him the back, and not the face, and had become so inflexible, they could not turn about to him, and to their duty. They had lost their eyes, and could not discern the way to return: "to do good they had no knowledge," Jer. iv. 22. They had lost the power of their limbs, and could no more return, though they had known the way, than "the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots," chap. xiii. 23. And they had withal lost heart to return: God being to them an unatoned God, his face set against them, they could not bear to approach him. So they never would have turned, although they had been able; but each of them would have said, "There is no hope. No, "for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go," Jer. ii. 25. Wherefore, had not the Mediator interposed, they had wandered endlessly: had not Jesus Christ taken the desperate case

in hand, there had never been a returning sinner of Adam's family, a true penitent, a heart kindly softened in sorrow for sin, nor turned in hatred against sin as sin, more than there is among the fallen angels. But upon consideration of the second Adam's walking with God, the whole way of obedience to the law, which they went off from; having withal laid on him the iniquities of them all; there was made a promise of giving them repentance, that "he should gather together in one, the children of God that were scattered abroad," John xi. 52. In performance of which promise, after his ascension into heaven, it was found, that God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life, Acts xi. 18.

Now, when one is justified by faith, and new-related to God, as his Friend, Father, and God, he is sanctified, and brought to true and evangelical repentance, according to this promise. Being come to Christ by faith, he comes back unto God by him in repentance, Heb. vii. 25. Whence it is called repentance toward God, which is the end whereunto faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ is the means, Acts xx. 21. Then, and not till then, it is, that the heart is set a-going in true gospel-repentance, pleasing to God, and acceptable in his sight; according to the Scripture: Ezek. xvi. 62, "And I will establish my covenant with thee." Ver. 63, "That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee." Chap. xx. 42, "And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel." Ver. 43, "And there shall ye remember your ways,—and ye shall loathe yourselves." Chap. xxxvi. 25, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." —Ver. 26, "A new heart also will I give you."—Ver. 28,—"And ye shall be my people, and I will be your God." Ver. 31, "Then shall ye remember your own evil ways,—and shall loathe yourselves." For then it is, that the love of God to the soul, which lay hid before, doth shine forth more or less clear; and being discerned by faith accordingly, warms the heart of the sinner with love to God again, according to that, 1 John iv. 19, "We love him, because he first loved us." And that love melts it into repentance for sin, as in the woman who, being forgiven much, loved much: and shewed her love, by her washing our Saviour's feet with tears, Luke vii. 37, 38, 47. The hard heart is then laid on the soft bed of the love and free grace of God in Christ; and the word of the law, inlaid with the gospel, falls on it, saying, "Break, for the Lord is gracious;" Joel ii. 13, "Rend your heart,—and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful,—and of great kindness." And this, like a hammer, breaketh the rock in pieces. The party being, as is

before declared, renewed in the whole man, put into a state of death unto sin, and life unto righteousness, the new nature vents itself in an ingenuous and thorough turning from sin unto God, in heart and life. By believing the sinner returns unto God as a portion, wherein to rest: in repenting he returns unto God as a Lord and Master, whom he is to obey. He turns from sin unto God, coming back as a runaway servant to his master, returning to his place and duty in the family. And he returns with blushing and tears. He is filled with sorrow and shame for offending a good and gracious God. His heart is turned against sin, in hatred of it: he hates it not only as a hurtful thing, that would ruin him: but as a filthy and loathsome thing, that defiles him. He loathes it, as the abominable thing that God hates; as the deformity of the soul, the very reverse of the glorious holiness of God expressed in his law. He loathes himself for it; calls himself fool and beast, for his entertaining it; smites on his breast, as if he would bruise that breast it was bred in; and smites on his thigh, as if he would break the legs that carried him in the way of it, Luke xv. 20, 21, and xviii. 13; Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. And he returns with full purpose of, and endeavours after new obedience; with a heart inclined to keep God's statutes always, even unto the end, Psalm cxix. 33; and filled with carefulness in that point, vehement desire of it, and zeal for it, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

The other chief branch of the promise of sanctification, is, the promise of actual grace and strength for all holy obedience; whereby one may be enabled acceptably to perform obedience, in all and every act of mortification or dying unto sin, and of living unto righteousness; to do every duty that is required of him, and to bear whatsoever affliction is laid upon him: Psalm xxii. 30, "A seed shall serve him." Zech. x. 12, "And I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his name." Hos. xiv. 9, "The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them." Ezek. xxxvi. 27, "And I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." And, Deut. xxx., the root-promise of sanctification, in circumcising the heart to love the Lord, is in the first place proposed, ver. 6; and then follow both the branches thereof together, to wit, the promise of repentance, and of actual grace for new obedience, ver. 8, "And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments." God planted Adam a noble vine, made him as a green tree full of sap, for bringing forth all fruits of holiness; but breaking the first covenant, he and all mankind in him withered and died, under the curse; upon which ensued an absolute barrenness, that no fruit of holiness could be expected from them more. But the se-

cond Adam having engaged to satisfy the law, by bearing the curse; there was thereupon made a promise of raising them up again to walk in newness of life. And it is performed in their habitual sanctification, wrought in them immediately upon their union with Christ: for though sanctification doth in the order of nature follow justification, and the new relation to God as a Friend, Father, and God; yet in respect of time, it is together and at once with them: in the same moment that a sinner is justified, he is also sanctified. But even when we are habitually sanctified, through the habits of grace infused into us by the Spirit; we are not of ourselves, that is to say, merely upon that stock, without new communications of actual grace by the same Spirit, able to bring forth any fruit of holiness: even of our gracious selves we can do nothing, as our Saviour teacheth, John xv. 4, 5. And the apostle professeth, in his own name, and in the name of all other gracious persons, 2 Cor. iii. 4, "And such trust have we through Christ to Godward." Ver. 5, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God. For," saith he, Philip. ii. 13, "it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do." And this is no more strange in the dispensation of grace, than that, in nature, fresh seed sown in good ground, yet cannot spring up, and bring forth fruit, without warming and moistening influences from the heavens; or, that we have a power of natural motion, and yet cannot actually move a finger, without a common providential influence of the Spirit of God, in, or by, whom we live and move, Acts xvii. 28. Wherefore the promise is extended, as we have said, unto actual grace and strength for the acts of holy obedience; and is so made forthcoming to believers in their actual and progressive sanctification.

And thus such a sufficient provision and allowance of grace is made in the covenant for believers, as that it is possible for them, even in this life, to perform obedience to the law of Christ, the ten commandments, the eternal rule of righteousness, in all the parts thereof, acceptably: so that there is no corruption so strong, but one may get it acceptably mortified; nor does the Lord require any duty so difficult, but one may get it acceptably done; nor is there any trial or affliction so heavy, but one may get it acceptably borne. If it had not been so, our Lord would not have made doing whatsoever he commands, the distinguishing mark of his friends, John xv. 14. The apostle doth indeed deny, that we are sufficient of ourselves; but withal he teacheth, that there is a sufficiency for us of God, 2 Cor. iii. 5. So the Lord himself taught him, in his own case, chap. xii. 9, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Without it

were so, Christ's yoke could not be easy, nor his burden light, Matt. xi. 30. Nay, they would be like the yoke and burden of the law as a covenant of works, grievous to be borne, chap. xxiii. 4. But his commandments are not grievous, 1 John v. 3. It was no vain boasting the apostle used, when he said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me," Philip. iv. 13. Nor was Epaphras out, in supposing that the Colossian believers might "stand complete in all the will of God," Col. iv. 12. David had God's own testimony, as to fact in that matter, Acts xiii. 22, "I have found David, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will."

This bears no prejudice to the doctrine of the imperfection of the obedience of the saints in this life, maintained by orthodox divines against the papists and other perfectionists; which, as it is abundantly evident from the Holy Scriptures, hath also a concurring testimony to the truth thereof, in the breasts of all the serious godly, to whom it is given by the Spirit to discern the holiness of God, the spirituality of the law, and the corruption of their own nature. But I am persuaded, that, through the sleight of Satan, that doctrine is, as several other precious truths are, a stone of stumbling to many, through their not adverting to the provision and allowance of grace made in this promise of the covenant; and that by this means many a poor sinner is snared and ruined, and the hands of many saints weakened in the practice of holiness; to the great disadvantage of the cause of holiness in the world.

To break that snare, and set this matter in a clear light, there are three things carefully to be distinguished.

1. Distinguish between performing obedience, in all the parts thereof, and in all the degrees of these parts. The latter indeed no man can, at any rate, do in this life, James iii. 2; Eccl. vii. 20. But the former every true believer may do, yea, and actually doth, so far as these parts are known to him, as appears from the texts above alleged. In confounding of these there lies a snare. "The best of men," say crafty sinners, "do in many things come short of the obedience required of them: and but so do we." Now, that the saints do come short of the degrees of every part of obedience required of them, is very true: but that they come short of any of the parts themselves known to them, which is the case of the crafty sinner seeking shelter for his sin here, is false. And herein the former do really distinguish themselves from the latter; as David showed himself of another make than Saul, by his fulfilling all God's will, in the several parts thereof, which Saul did not, Acts xiii. 22. It is here as in the case of a family, consisting of pliable children, and refractory servants. The master of the family pre-

scribes several pieces of work to be done by them all: and his grown children, who have perfect skill of their business, to do them all exactly according to his mind; and thus glorified saints obey: the younger children who are learning to work, do, out of regard to their father's command, indeed put hand to every one of them, but they can do none of them exactly; even so it is with the saints on earth; but the refractory servants put hand to some of them, but quite neglect others of them, and this is the manner of the wicked and slothful servant, who seeks shelter here for his sloth, and his partiality in obedience.

2. Distinguish between performing obedience perfectly, and performing it acceptably. No man can perform obedience perfectly in this life, Philip. iii. 12; but every true believer performs obedience acceptably: Acts x. 35, "He that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." In confounding these there is a snare. The crafty sinner saith, "There is none that performs obedience perfectly: and I am sure I do many things, though indeed not all." Now, that true believers do not perform obedience perfectly, is very true; but that they do not perform it acceptably, which is the case of the crafty sinner, as not universal, and therefore not sincere, in his obedience, is altogether false. They who are masters know very well how to make this distinction, in their domestic affairs. If a child, or pliable servant, shew a real good-will to obey their orders, they will accept of their work, though it is not done, in every point, as they would have it; so, if there be first a willing mind, discovered in sincere endeavours, it is accepted of God for the sake of Christ, according to that a man hath, 2 Cor. viii. 12. But if a servant shall quite neglect to put hand to a thing which he is peremptorily ordered to do, because he cannot do it every way so as the master would have it done; this is construed to be a contempt of the master's authority. And what other account can men imagine will be made in heaven of their conduct, in instances of plain and unquestionable duty, which they quite neglect; and of sin, that they indulge themselves in?

3. Distinguish between ability in ourselves for performing obedience in all the parts thereof acceptably, and ability for it in Christ to be fetched in by faith. Neither saints nor sinners have the former, 2 Cor. iii. 5; but all true believers have the latter: they have such ability in Christ their head, Col. ii. 10, "Ye are complete in him," Philip iv. 13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." And it is in the gospel offered to all, so that whosoever will, may have it: Matth. xi. 28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Ver.

29, "Take my yoke upon you." If a discreet master command his servant to go and do a particular piece of work, it will not excuse the servant's neglect, that he wanted instruments necessary for it; because he will reckon, that his bidding him do the work, did suppose his allowing him instruments, without which it could not be done; and that the servant ought to have called for them. But here lies a ruining snare to many. "We can do nothing of ourselves," say they: and hereupon the sluggard puts his hand in his bosom, and does nothing; but, having laid his head on this soft pillow, he sleeps to death on the bed of sloth and carnal ease. O that men would open their eyes, and see through this piece of ruining deceit! No man shall be able to excuse himself hereby, from the performance of holy obedience in all the parts thereof. Nay, this his conduct will bring him under a double guilt; one, of neglecting what it was his duty to do; another, of despising the grace offered him, to enable him thereto: and so he will be condemned, not because he could not obey, but because he would not. God hath never been a hard master to mankind, reaping where he did not sow; but hath always made a suitable allowance of grace and strength to them for his work. In the covenant of works, only perfect obedience could be accepted at the hands of the covenant-people; and there was a conformable allowance of grace and strength conform, made to them in it. God made man upright, able to obey the law in perfection. And the law justly insists for perfection of obedience still, upon the ground of that provision which was made for it, though it is now lost; being that it was lost by man's own fault. In the covenant of grace, which is adapted to our fallen state, sincere obedience may be accepted, notwithstanding of imperfections attending it. And accordingly, in it there is made a provision and allowance of such a sufficiency of grace and strength, as thereby every piece of obedience required of the covenant-people may be done, even in this life; though not as it should be done, yet so as it may be accepted: accepted, I say, not for its own sake indeed, nor for the worker's sake neither; but for Christ's sake, in whose name it is required to be done and offered to God, as a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5. This is evident from the forecited passages, 2 Cor. iii. 5, and xii. 9; Philip. iv. 13. But withal, this sufficiency of grace and strength for that effect, is not lodged in the covenant-people themselves; but in Christ their head, in whom they have it, as the branches have a sufficiency of sap and juice in the vine, for their bringing forth fruit in the season: Isa. xlv. 24. "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." 2 Tim. ii. 1, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the

grace that is in Christ Jesus." And it is fetched into the soul by faith, believing the promise: Jer. xvii. 7, "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord." Ver. 8, "For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters." Psalm xxviii. 7, "My heart trusted in him, and I am helped." And so every command of Christ in this covenant, supposeth an allowance of grace and strength, sufficient for the performing of it in an acceptable manner. Accordingly, the declaration of grace stands on the front of the ten commandments, Exod. xx. 2, "I am the Lord thy God." Ver. 3, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," &c. If the law came to us without the gospel, we might have some excuse for not doing what we are commanded; yet not so strong, but that it would be overthrown, as in the case of pagans, Rom. ii. 12. But since, with the commands of the law requiring obedience, the gospel also comes to us, shewing how we may be enabled to obey them acceptably, and offering us that ability in Christ Jesus; we are inexcusable in that matter: the plea of the wicked and slothful servant is rejected; and he is condemned, not only for not giving obedience, but for refusing grace and strength offered him, to enable him thereto.

Wherefore, let us firmly believe this promise of the gospel-covenant, that we may give obedience to the commands of the law: for where there is no hope of performing acceptably what is required, there can be no suitable endeavours after it. If the heart is hopeless in that matter, the hands will certainly hang down: and the issue must needs be, either a ceasing from the duty altogether, or else a very faint promise thereof, unacceptable to God. But the faith of this promise will remove the cover of sloth, animate to every good work, and bring in grace and strength for all holy obedience; "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 Cor. vii. 1.

Since God hath not given to the church the command of sanctification to be obeyed, without the promise of sanctification to be believed; but he that hath said, "Wash ye, make ye clean," hath said also, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean;" no man hath ground to imagine, that he doth so much as endeavour to comply with the true design of the command of sanctification, who doth not first believe and embrace the promise of sanctification; but falls to work with the nitre and soap of his own faithful endeavours, to wash himself clean. Such a one mistakes the true intent and import of the command of sanctification, as it stands in the Bible; and that as far as the command of a discreet master would be mistaken by a foolish servant, who being bid to go

and dig a parcel of ground, should thereupon fall a digging it with his nails, never looking after a spade, mattock, or any other instrument proper to dig with.

Now, the promise of sanctification, which its several branches, is grafted upon the promise of a resurrection made to Christ. For the condition of the covenant being fulfilled, he as the head was, according to the promise, brought again from the dead, and lives unto God, death having no more dominion over him: and in virtue hereof again, his members are brought to repentance from dead works, and unto newness of life. Hence we are said to be begotten again, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Pet. i. 3; forasmuch as we are raised with him (Col. iii. 1.) unto newness of life, (Rom. vi. 4, 5.), according to the promise, Is. xxvi. 19, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise:—The earth shall cast out the dead;"namely, in the first place, the head Christ Jesus, the first-born from the dead, Col. i. 18, and then his mystical members after him in their order. Compare Hos. vi. 2, "In the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

Thus far of the promise of sanctification. Follows:—

IV. The promise of perseverance in grace.

The promise of eternal life doth in like manner comprehend the the perseverance in grace to be conferred on all the covenant-people, being justified, new-related to God, and sanctified; so that, being once brought into the state of grace, they shall never fall away from it totally nor finally. This promise we have, Jer. xxxii. 40, "And I will make an everlasting covenant, with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Here they are secured on both sides; that God will never cast them off, and that they shall never desert him. And that this benefit is included in the promise of eternal life, is clear from the apostle's adducing this last to prove it, Heb. x. 38, "Now the just shall live by faith." Such is the malice of Satan, and the advantage he had against the saints in this life; so manifold are the snares for them in the present evil world; such a tender bud of heaven is the implanted grace of God in them, and so corrupt, fickle, and inconstant are the hearts of the best, while here; that, if their perseverance had not been secured by promise in the covenant, but made the condition of the covenant, and left to the management of their own free-will, they would have had but a sorry restoration of it into the state of grace; as much as if they had got a spark of fire to keep alive in the midst of an ocean. At that rate they might all have perished; and Jesus

Christ, notwithstanding of the shedding of his blood for them, might have eternally remained a head without members, a king without subjects. But the glory of Christ, and his salvation of his redeemed, were not left at such uncertainty. That perseverance which the first Adam failed of, and was made the condition of the second covenant, the second Adam did undertake in their name: and thereupon was made the promise of their perseverance. And he having accordingly persevered unto the end, in obedience to the law for them, being obedient even to the death, it was purchased for them. Thus Christ's perseverance in obedience to the law, till the condition of the covenant was perfectly fulfilled, is the ground in law upon which the perseverance of the saints is infallibly secured, in virtue of the faithfulness of God in the promise.

Now, this promise begins to be performed to them, as soon as they are united unto Christ; and it goes on all along, until their death, when they enter into glory: yea, strictly speaking, death is not the last, but a middle term of their perseverance; after which it proceeds far more illustriously than before. Upon their union with the second Adam, being savingly interested in his obedience which he persevered in unto the end, they are confirmed, that they can no more fall away: even as the first Adam's natural seed would have been confirmed, upon his having completed the course of his probationary obedience, and fulfilling the condition of the covenant of works. The mystical members of Christ do then obtain the former, as the reward of his continued obedience; as in the other supposed event, Adam's natural seed would have obtained the latter, as the reward of his continued obedience.

The promise of the perseverance of the saints, seems to be grafted upon the promise of assistance made to Christ in his work. The Father promised to him, that he would uphold him, so as he should not fail, Isa. xlii. 1, 4. The which promise being made to him as a public person, carries along with it the preservation and support of his members, in all their temptations, trials, and dangers of perishing; ensuring the safe conduct, as of the head, so of the mystical members through this world, till they be out of the reach of danger.

Now, of the promise of perseverance there are two chief branches.

1. A promise of continued influences of grace, to be from time to time conferred on them, being once brought into a state of grace: Isa. xxvii. 3, "I will water it every moment." Their stock of inherent grace would soon fail, if they were left to live upon it, without supply coming in from another hand: of itself it would wither away and die out, if it were not fed, Luke xxii. 32; John xv. 6. Innocent Adam had a larger stock of inherent grace than any of the saints in

this life, and yet he lost it. But the grace of God in believers cannot be so lost: for, in virtue of the promise, there are continued influences secured for them; namely, preserving influences, whereby grace given, is kept from dying out, that as they are sanctified by God the Father so they are preserved in Jesus Christ, Jude 1, exciting influences, whereby the grace preserved beginning to languishing, or being brought low by the prevailing of corruption, and temptation is stirred up and put in exercise again; and strengthening influences, whereby the grace excited, is increased, and gathers more strength, to the overtopping of corruption, and repelling of temptation: Hos. xiv. 7, "They shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine." Accordingly, their faith is never suffered to fail totally, but is preserved, excited, and strengthened; and all the graces with it, and by it. And this is brought to pass, through the communication of new supplies of grace to them, by the Spirit, from Christ their head, from which all the body having nourishment ministered, (namely, through the supply of the Spirit, Phil. i. 19), increaseth with the increase of God," Col. ii. 19.

2. The other chief branch of this promise, is a promise of pardon, continued pardon for the sins of their daily walk; whereby emergent differences betwixt God and them, come to be done away from time to time, so that a total rupture is prevented: Jer. xxxiii. 8, "I will pardon all their iniquities." Howbeit the justified have, as to their state, no need of a new formal pardon, but only of a manifestation of their former pardon; since the pardon given in justification, is never revoked, though by means of their after-sins they may lose sight of it: yet as to their daily walk, they have great need of a formal pardon; forasmuch as they are daily contracting new guilt: John xiii. 10, "He that is washed, needeth not, save to wash his feet." For howbeit no sins of the justified can bring any more under the guilt of eternal wrath; nevertheless they do bring them under the guilt of fatherly anger, Psalm lxxxix. 30—32. And therefore they need to pray every day, "Our Father, forgive us our debts."

This pardon is given them, upon their renewed actings of faith in Jesus Christ, and of repentance towards God; yet not for their believing and repenting, but for Christ's sake, even as the first pardon is given, 1 John ii. 1, 2, and i. 7. Applying the blood of Christ afresh to their souls, they are anew moved to repentance, turning from their sins with hatred of them, sorrow, shame, and self-lothing for them. Looking by faith on him whom they have pierced, they mourn in renewed repentance; and so receive this pardon. For although repentance doth not go before, but follows after the pardon of sin in justification; yet not only faith, but repentance also, goes

before the pardons given to those already justified: 1 John i. 7, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Vers. 9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful, and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us." Therefore we are ordered to pray thus, "Our Father, forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," Matth. vi. 9, 12.; to teach all the children of God, that if they would have their Father's forgiveness, they must in the first place forgive others: which is yet more clearly intimated, Luke xi. 4, "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us." But the matter is not so stated, with respect to the pardon of sin in justification; but that pardon is the spring of our forgiving others, Matth. xviii. 32, 33. For our hearty and acceptable forgiving of others, proceeds from true Christian love to our neighbour; and that flows from love to God; the which is kindled in our hearts by God's pardoning grace to us, Luke vii. 47; Eph. iv. 32. The reason of the difference lies here, the unjustified sinner is under the guilt of revenging wrath, which seeks not the amendment, but the destruction of the guilty: wherefore till once it is removed, there can be no true evangelical repentance, no acceptable amendment, in the sinner; these being really a restoration of him to life, incompatible with a legal destination of him to destruction. But the justified saint is only under the guilt of fatherly anger, which seeks not the destruction, but the recovery and amendment of the guilty: and therefore it is not removed until he repent, turning from his sin unto God in an acceptable manner; and that is the very amendment God seeketh in shewing his anger against him, as in the case of David, and of Peter.

And thus are the saints caused to persevere in grace, both real and relative. The promise of continued influences secures not only the preservation, but the renewed exercise of their grace, particularly of their faith and repentance: and the promise of continued pardon to them believing and repenting, secures the removal of the guilt of fatherly anger. The Spirit of Christ ever dwells in them, and so continues an inviolable bond of their union with him; and dwelling in them, he recovers them when they are fallen, stirs up the holy fire of grace lying hid with ashes of corruption. Then the withered hand of faith is again stretched out; and the man believes the promise of the pardon of guilt of eternal wrath, as to all his sins; this melts his heart in kindly repentance; and so he believes the promise of continued pardon, as to fatherly anger, with respect to the sins the causes of God's present controversy with him, and obtains pardon accordingly. By these means, matters are always kept from coming to a total rupture.

V. THE PROMISE OF TEMPORAL BENEFITS.

In the fifth and last place, the promise of eternal life to the elect, considered in this period, comprehends a promise of temporal benefits to be conferred on them, and every one of them, being united to Christ; and that in such measure, as God sees meet for his own glory and their good. This promise stands imbodied with the spiritual promises in the covenant, Ezek. xxxvi. 29, "I will also save you from all your uncleannesses, and I will call for the corn, and I will increase it." Hos. ii. 22, "The earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel." Indeed this is not the principal thing contained in the promissory part of the covenant: but it is a necessary addition thereto; as the present state of the saints, while in this world, doth require, Matth. vi. 33. And thus godliness, as the apostle observes, 1 Tim. iv. 8, hath promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

When God took man into the first covenant, he made provision in it for his temporal as well as for his spiritual and eternal welfare. He gave him a right to, and dominion over the creatures in the earth, sea, and air; giving and granting upon him full power, soberly to use them, and to dispose of them, for God's glory and his own comfort: and this lordship to be holden of him as sovereign lord of all, firm and irreversible, by the tenor of that covenant, as long as he should continue in his obedience; but to be forfeited to all intents and purposes, in case he should by transgression break the covenant, Gen. i. 28, and ii. 16, 17. But man continued not in this honour: he brake God's covenant, and so fell from that his right to, and dominion over the creatures. By his transgression he forfeited life itself; and consequently lost his covenant-right to all the means and comforts of life. And in this condition are all natural men, with respect to these things. They have no covenant-right to the means and comforts of life, whatever portion of them they are possessed of. All the right that they have to them, is a mere providential, precarious right; such as a condemned man hath to his food, during the time his execution is delayed at the pleasure of the prince. This is a most uncertain and uncomfortable holding: nevertheless it so far avails, that they are not, properly speaking, violent possessors of temporal benefits; having just the same right to them as to their forfeited life, while it is left them by the disposal of providence. Wherefore the worst of men may lawfully eat and drink, and take the benefit of other necessaries of life, whatever Satan may suggest to the contrary in the hour of temptation; yea, they ought

to do it, and they sin against God egregiously if they do it not; because he hath said, "thou shalt not kill."

But the second Adam having undertaken to bear the curse, and to give perfect obedience to the law, in the name of his spiritual seed; there was thereupon made a promise of restoring to them the forfeited life, with all the means thereof; and particularly, a promise of the good things requisite for the support and comfort of their temporal life in this world, till at death they be carried home to heaven. And the performance of this promise to them, is begun immediately upon their uniting with Christ: then their covenant relation to the first Adam is found to be lawfully dissolved; the forfeiture is taken off; and a new covenant right to the creatures is given them: 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, "All are yours; and ye are Christ's." And it goes on, all along till death; so much of this their stock being from time to time put into their hands, as the great administrator sees needful for them. And whether that be little or much, they do from that moment possess it by a new title: it is theirs by covenant.

Now, this promise is grafted upon the promise made to Christ of his inheriting all things. For they that are his, are joint heirs with him, Rom. viii. 17, to inherit all things too through him, Rev. xxi. 7. The estate and honour which the first Adam lost for himself and family, by his disobedience in breaking of the first covenant, was, in the second covenant, made over by promise to Christ the second Adam, for him and his, upon the condition of his obedience. The which obedience being performed the whole ancient estate of the family was recovered, together with the honours thereunto belonging. The ancient dominion was restored, in the person of Christ as second Adam: and all his mystical members partake thereof in him. This the Psalmist teacheth, Psalm viii. 4, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?" Ver. 5, "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." Ver. 6, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." Ver. 7, "All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field." Ver. 8, "The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." Though there is here a manifest view to the first Adam and all mankind in him, as they were happily and honourably stated at their creation; yet we are infallibly assured by the apostle, that this passage is meant of Christ the second Adam. Heb. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9, and his mystical members in him, ver. 6. Accordingly, Abraham had the promise, that he should be the heir of the world; and he had it

through the righteousness of faith, *i.e.* the righteousness which faith apprehends, Rom. iv. 13. Now, Abraham was a type of Christ, and the father of the faithful, who are all blessed as he was. Therefore this promise was primarily to Christ, through the righteousness by him wrought; secondarily to his members, through the same righteousness apprehended by faith.

This promise of temporal benefits, carries believers' possession of the same, as far as their need in that kind doth go, Phil. iv. 19. Of which need, not they themselves, but their Father, is the fit judge, Matt. vi. 32. Accordingly, there are two chief branches of the promise, namely, a promise of provision, and a promise of protection.

1. A promise of provision of good things necessary for this life; upon which they may confidently trust God for them, whatever straits they are at any time reduced to: Psalm xxxiv. 10, "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord, shall not want any good thing." Their meat and drink are secured for them in the covenant; the which being perceived by faith, cannot miss to give them a peculiar relish, however mean their fare be, as to quantity or quality: Isa. xxxiii. 16, "Bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure." They shall be fed, though they be not feasted: Psalm xxxvii. 3, "Verily thou shalt be fed." They shall have enough, they shall be satisfied, Joel ii. 26. And even days of famine shall not mar that, their satisfaction: Psalm xxxvii. 19, "In the days of famine they shall be satisfied." And as sleep for their refreshment is necessary too, the promise bears it also: Prov. iii. 24, "Thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet." They need clothing; and provision is made as to it: Matt. vi. 30, "If God so clothe the grass of the field—shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Having made them, by covenant, a new grant of life, and of a body, which are more than meat and clothing, he will not refuse them these lesser things necessary for the support of the greater. Ver. 25, "Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" Thus our fallen first parents, having believed and embraced the promise of life, had, with the new grant of life, food and raiment provided for them, as is particularly taken notice of, Gen. iii. 15, 18, 21. A blessing also on their labours is promised, and success in their lawful callings and affairs, Isa. lxv. 21, 22, 23. In a word, the covenant bears, that God will withhold no good thing from them that live uprightly, Psalm lxxxiv. 11.

2. There is also a promise of protection from the evil things that concern this life: Psalm xci. 10, "There shall no evil befal thee."

Ver. 11, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Together with the bread and the water provided by the covenant for them to live on, the munitions of rocks are secured to them for a place of defence, where they may safely enjoy them, Isa. xxxiii. 16. The same Lord who is a sun to nourish them, will be a shield to protect them, Psalm lxxxiv. 11. He will be a wall of fire round about them, to cherish them, and to keep off, scare, and fright away all their enemies, Zech. ii. 5. The covenant yields a broad covert for the safety of believers; Psalm xci. 4, "He shall cover thee with his feathers." The covert of the covenant is stretched out over their bodies; over their health, to preserve it, while it is necessary for God's honour and their own good, Prov. iii. 7, "Fear the Lord, and depart from evil;" ver. 8, "It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones;" over their lives, as long as God has any service for them in this world: so in sickness they are carefully seen to, Psalm xli. 3, "Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness;" their diseases healed, and they recovered, Psalm ciii. 3, 4. And they are delivered from enemies that seek their life, Psalm xli. 2. Yea, when death rides in triumph, having made havoc on all sides of them, as by sword or pestilence, they are found safe under the covert of the covenant, Psalm xci. 6, 7. This covert is stretched over their names, credit, and reputation: Job v. 21, "Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue:" either the tongues of virulent men shall not reach them; or they shall not be able to make the dirt to stick on them: or else if they shall be permitted to make it stick for a while, the covert of the covenant shall wipe all off at length, and their righteousness shall be brought forth as the light, and their judgment as the noon-day, Psalm xxxvii. 6. It is stretched over their houses and dwelling-places: Psalm xci. 10, "Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." It goes round about their substance, making a hedge about all that they have, Job i. 10. Yea, and there is a lap of it to cast over their widows and children, when they are dead and gone: Jer. xlix. 11, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me."

Thus far of the promise of eternal life, considered in the second period, to wit, from union with Christ, until death.

PERIOD III.

FROM DEATH, THROUGH ETERNITY.

It remains that we consider the promise of eternal life to the elect,

as it is accomplished to, and hath its effect upon them, from their death, all along through eternity. And so the great lines of it are two; to wit, a promise of victory over death, and a promise of everlasting life in heaven. And these things I shall touch more briefly, having handled them at large elsewhere.

II. THE PROMISE OF VICTORY OVER DEATH.

The promise of eternal life comprehends a promise of victory over death, to be conferred on all and every one of the spiritual seed, in the encounter with that last enemy: Isa. xxv. 8, "He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces." After the wearisome march, and the reiterated fights of faith they have in their passage through the wilderness of this world, they have to pass the Jordan of death, and to fight the last battle with that enemy. But the victory is secured on their side by promise; of which there are two chief branches, to wit, a promise of disarming death, and a promise of destroying it.

1. There is a promise of disarming death to the dying believer; so that it shall at no rate be able to reach him a ruining stroke: Hos. xiii. 14, "O death, I will be thy plagues;" namely, by taking the sting quite away, 1 Cor. xv. 55. When sin entered the world, death followed; and sin furnished death with an envenomed sting, wherewith to kill the sinner, both soul and body at once; the holy law, with its curse, fixed this sting in death's hand; having first so pointed it, that it could not miss of doing execution. But Christ, the second Adam, having undertaken to bear the curse, and to die in the room and stead of his people; there was thereupon made a promise of disarming death to them: since the Surety suffering the pains of death armed with its sting, the principal behoved to be liberate from suffering the same thing over again. And thus the covenant secures believers from death's harm. Yea, it so alters the nature thereof, that it makes it a quite new thing to them from what it was originally. Hence death is found in the inventory of the saints' treasure, 1 Cor. iii. 22, "Whether life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all is yours." Not only is life theirs by the covenant, but death is theirs too by the same tenor. And indeed as it is new-framed by the covenant, it is of excellent use to them, bringing them into a state of perfection, and everlasting rest, Heb. xii. 23; Rev. xiv. 13.

This promise is grafted upon the promise of victory made to Christ, as appears from the forecited, Isa. xxv. 8. He encountered death, armed with its sting, on purpose to disarm it to his people:

he received the sting thereof into his own soul and body, that they might be delivered from it. Wherefore the promise of victory over death made to him, secures the disarming of it to them. And as the promise makes them safe, in the encounter with that last enemy: so the lively faith of it may in this case deliver from fear.

2. There is a promise of destroying death to the dead believer, by a glorious resurrection at the last day; Hos. xiii. 14, "O grave, I will be thy destruction." When death entered into the world by sin, then came the grave, as death's attendant, to keep fast his prisoners for him, till the general judgment: and thus the grave serves death, in the case of all who die in a state of enmity with God. But Christ, the second Adam, having in the second covenant engaged to go, in the room and stead of his people, death's prisoner, into the grave, and there to lie till their debt should be fully paid; there was made thereupon a promise of a glorious resurrection to his members, whereby they shall be put out of the reach of death for good and all, at the last day: for "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory," 1 Cor. xv. 54; and then shall they triumphantly sing, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" ver. 55. And thus the covenant secures the forming anew of their dissolved bodies, the return of their departed souls into them, and their coming forth of their graves glorious, immortal, and incorruptible. In the faith of which, the saints may with comfort consider the grave as but a retiring place, from whence after a while they shall come forth with unspeakable joy.

This promise is grafted upon the promise of a resurrection made to Christ, Isa. xxvi. 19, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise." The promise of a resurrection being made to him as a public person, it must take place also on his mystical members, whose federal head he was. Hence the Psalmist says, his flesh should rest in hope, namely, in the grave, in hope of a glorious resurrection, because the holy one Jesus was not to see corruption, Psalm xvi. 2, 10, with Acts xiii. 35; thereby teaching, that Christ's resurrection would insure his glorious resurrection, as a member of the mystical body by faith. And indeed there is such a connection between Christ's resurrection and the happy resurrection of the saints, that they stand and fall together: 1 Cor. xv. 16, "For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised."

II. THE PROMISE OF EVERLASTING LIFE IN HEAVEN.

THE promise of eternal life doth, in the last place, comprehend a

promise of everlasting life in heaven, to be conferred on all and every one of the spiritual seed after death: Dan. xii. 2, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life." This was more sparingly revealed under the Old Testament, than under the New, 2 Tim. i. 10. Yet was it, even then, so clearly revealed, that all the holy patriarchs lived and died in the faith of it, Heb. xi. 13—16. The fathers before Abraham saw it in the promise of the seed of the woman, which was to bruise the serpent's head: and from Abraham, they saw it in the promise of Canaan. But now by the gospel, this life and immortality are set in a full light. By the breach of the first covenant that life was forfeited, the heavenly paradise lost to Adam and all mankind; in token whereof, he was turned out of the earthly paradise. But the second Adam, having in the second covenant, undertaken the redemption of the forfeited inheritance, there was a new promise of it made in favour of his seed: and they are invested with an indefeasible right thereto, in the first moment of their union with Christ by faith; howbeit they are not instantly put in possession thereof. And when they do come to the possession, it is not given them all at once, but at two different periods, in different measures; according to the two chief branches of the promise thereof, namely, a promise of transporting their souls into heaven at death, and a promise of transporting them soul and body thither at the last day.

1. There is a promise of transporting their souls separate from their bodies, into heaven, there to behold and enjoy the face of God. And it is accomplished to them immediately after their death. It was most plainly declared and applied by our Saviour to the penitent thief on the cross, Luke xxiii. 43, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." But it was in the faith of it, that the covenant was to David, even in the face of death, all his salvation, and all his desire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; and that Paul had a desire to depart, knowing that he was to be with Christ upon his departure, Philip. i. 23. And it is in the faith of the same, that the whole church militant doth groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with the house which is from heaven, that is, the heavenly glory, 2 Cor. v. 2. Indeed the curse of the first covenant did, upon the breaking of that covenant, fall to their lot, as well as to the rest of mankind; and that curse would natively have issued in cutting them asunder, as covenant-breakers, and appointing them their portion with the hypocrites; but that being executed to the full on Christ their head, to the parting asunder of his holy soul and body, it can operate no more on them. Wherefore, howbeit others die in virtue of the curse, separating their souls and bodies, the one to the place

of torment, the other to the grave, till the last day; yet they do not so die. Being redeemed from the curse, Gal. iii. 13, they shall never see such death, John viii. 51. But they die in conformity to Christ their head, being predestinate to be conformed to his image, (Rom. viii. 29), who is the first-born from the dead, Col. i. 18. and the first fruits of them that sleep, which every man is to follow in his own order, 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. That, as in the case of the head, so in the case of the members, as death came on by sin, sin may go off by death. In virtue of their communion with Christ in his death, the union betwixt their souls and mortal bodies is dissolved; their souls dismissed in peace into the heavenly glory, there to remain till such time as their bodies, laid down in the grave, come, in virtue of their communion with Christ in his resurrection, to put on incorruption and immortality.

This promise is grafted upon the promise of acceptance made to Christ, when he should make his soul an offering for sin. In confidence of which acceptance, dying on the cross he commended his spirit, or soul, into the hands of his Father, Luke xxii. 46; and told the penitent thief, he was to be that very day in paradise, though then it was towards the evening of it, ver. 43. The words in which he commended his soul to his Father, were David's, Psalm xxxi. 5, "Into thine hand I commit my spirit;" thereby intimating, that the reception of the souls of his dying people into the hands of the Father, depends on the reception of his soul into them. For his soul was, in virtue of the covenant, so received, as a public soul, representing the souls of the whole seed; whence David speaking of Christ, saith, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell," Psalm. xvi. 10, with Acts ii. 31. Wherefore in the promise of receiving Christ's soul, was comprehended a promise of receiving the souls of all his mystical members.

2. There is a promise of transporting them, soul and body, into heaven, there to be ever with the Lord; which is to be accomplished unto them at the last day: Dan. xii. 2, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Ver. 3, "And they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness," (or rather, they that do righteously, of the many), "as the stars for ever and ever." Whereas the many mentioned, ver. 2, and comprehending all, are there divided into two sorts, in respect of their future state, in the event of the resurrection: the happy part, being the first sort of them, is designed ver. 3, from their present state in this life, the wise, and they that do righteously; that is, in New Testament lan-

guage, the righteous, Matt. xiii. 43, and they that have done good, John v. 29, in opposition to the foolish, and they that have done evil. Those having come forth, unto the resurrection of life, John v. 29, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever: yea, they shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father, Matt. xiii. 43. This is the highest pinnacle of the saints' hopes; wherein they, in their whole man, shall have the whole of eternal life in its perfection. Man had a conditional promise hereof, in the covenant of works; but the condition being broken, the benefit promised was lost; heaven's gates were shut against Adam, and all his natural seed. Howbeit Christ the second Adam, having undertaken to fulfil the condition of the second covenant, which was stated from an exact consideration of the demands that the broken first covenant had on his spiritual seed; there was a new promise of it made in their favour; and it absolute. And to his fulfilling of that condition, both the making and performing of this promise are owing allenarly. None other's works but his could ever have availed to reduce the forfeiture, and purchase a new right: and his works do it so effectually, that they secure the putting all his seed in actual possession of the purchased inheritance; so that they shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ, Rom. v. 17.

This is the promise of the covenant, which is the last of all in performing; as being the consummation of all the rest, not to be accomplished until the mystery of God be finished. The Old Testament saints died in the faith of it; and it is not as yet performed to them: nay, the New Testament saints have died, and still must die, in the faith of it; not having it performed to them neither, till it be at once accomplished to the whole seed together, at the end of the world. Thus this promise remains to be an unseen object of faith to the church militant; and to the church triumphant too, whose flesh must rest in hope till that day, Psalm xvi. 9. But because the term prefixed for performing thereof, is, in the depth of sovereign wisdom, for reasons becoming the divine perfections, set at such a distance; there have been some signal pledges given of it, to confirm the church's faith in the case. Such was the translating of Enoch, soul and body, into heaven, in the patriarchal period; Elias, in the time of the law; and our blessed Saviour, in the time of the gospel.

This promise is grafted upon the promise of a glorious exaltation made to Christ; by which was secured to him his ascension, in soul and body, into heaven, and entering into his glory: Luke xxiv. 26, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into

his glory?" Both these were necessary in respect of the covenant: his suffering was necessary, in respect of the condition thereof, which behoved to be fulfilled by him; and his entering into his glory was necessary, in respect of the promise thereof, which behoved to be fulfilled unto him. Now, Christ ascended and entered into glory, as a public person, as a forerunner entering for us, Heb. vi. 20. And therefore the promise, in virtue of which he ascended and entered into it, comprehends the ascension and glory of all his mystical members, who are therefore said to sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, Eph. ii. 6. And then, and not till then, will the promise be perfectly fulfilled to him, when all the mystical members are personally there, together with their head; when the whole seed, perfectly recovered from death, shall reign there, together with him, in life, for evermore.

And this shall suffice to have been said here of the promise of eternal life, in the last period thereof.

INFERENCE FROM THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

Thus we have opened the promise of eternal life to the elect, with the effects thereof on them, in its several periods; to wit, before their union with Christ; and then, from their union with Christ until death; and finally, from their death, through eternity: the whole springing out of the promises peculiar to Christ himself. For as these last were fulfilled, in preserving the root of Jesse, notwithstanding of the various changes that family did undergo, in which it was often in hazard of extinction, until such time as Christ sprang out of it, as a root out of a dry ground, Isa. xi. 1, 10; and liii. 2; and then, in carrying him up, and carrying him through in his work notwithstanding of the load of imputed sin that lay upon him, and the opposition he met with in the world, and the powers of hell, engaged against him, Isa. xlix. 8; and l, 7, 8, 9; and finally, in raising him from the dead, taking him up into heaven, and glorifying him there for ever and ever, 1 Tim. iii. 16. Even so the promise of eternal life to the elect, included therein, is fulfilled, in preserving them in their unconverted state, till such time as they are united to Christ by faith: and then, in carrying them up, and carrying them through, in favour and communion with God, during the whole time of their continuance in this world, notwithstanding of all the opposition from the devil the world and the flesh: and lastly, in raising them up at the last day, and receiving them soul and body, into heaven, there to be ever with the Lord.

And now, from the whole of what hath been said on that point, we

deduce the following inference, that all the benefits of the covenant of grace bestowed, or to be bestowed on sinners, are the sure mercies of David, Isa. lv. 3. This may be taken up in these three things following:—

1. They are all of them mercies, pure mercies, without respect to any worthiness in the receivers. They all are free grace gifts; for the covenant is to us a covenant of grace, from the first to the last: Eph. ii. 7, "That in the ages to come, he might show the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus." Ver. 8, "For by grace are ye saved, through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." The receiving of believers into glory, is, after all their working, as much of free grace, as is the quickening of them, when being dead in sin, they could do no good work at all. They have their faith and their works, their grace and their glory, their temporal and their eternal good things, all of them equally of free grace: for they are all secured to them in, and flow from the promise of the covenant made before the world began; and are founded on a ground which they had no manner of hand in the laying of.

2. They all are the mercies of David, that is, of Jesus Christ the Son of David. His obedience and death are the alone channel wherein the free grace of the covenant runs, bringing along with it all those mercies, Eph. ii. 7. It is to the holiness of his nature, the righteousness of his life, and the satisfaction made by his death, they are all owing: for upon these alone, and upon nothing in us, whether before or after conversion, is the promise of eternal life founded. Our believing through grace, while others continue in unbelief; our seeing God in glory, while others are cast into outer darkness; the bread we eat, and the water we drink, in this life, together with the hidden manna we shall eat of, and the rivers of pleasures we shall drink of, in heaven; are all equally the purchase of our Redeemer's blood.

3. *Lastly*, They are all of them sure mercies. What of them the saints have already got, they could not have missed of; and what of them they have not as yet received, is as sure as if they had it in hand, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, "David perceived that the Lord had confirmed him king over Israel;" and that upon this ground, "for his kingdom was lift up on high," 1 Chron. xiv. 2. Now, Saul's kingdom was lift up on high too; and yet he lost it. But David had his kingdom by the covenant; Saul, not so: hence the former seeing the promise begin to be accomplished, rightly concluded, that it would hold on till it was fully performed; notwithstanding that the latter fell from his excellency. Uncovenanted mercies are tottering

mercies; but the covenant-mercies are sure. The former may flow plentifully for a while, and yet at length be quite dried up for ever; but the spring of the latter being once opened, will flow for evermore without interruption. The promise is infallibly sure, and cannot miscarry: it is sure from the nature of God who made it; even from his infallible truth, and from his justice too in respect of Christ, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7.

Thus far of the second part of the covenant, namely, the promissory part.

NO PROPER PENALTY OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

A penalty is no essential part of a proper covenant. It is but accidental only, arising not from the nature of a covenant, but from the nature of the covenanters, who being fallible, may break either the condition, or the promise: in which case a penalty is annexed, to secure the performance of the condition on the one side, and of the promise on the other. Wherefore, since the party contracting on man's side, on whom it lay to perform the condition of this covenant, was infallible; as was the party contracting on heaven's side, on whom it lay to perform the promise of it: there was no place at all for a penalty thereof, properly so called; as there was none in the first covenant, but upon one side. In the second covenant, the Father and the Son absolutely trusted each the other. Upon the credit of the Son, the Father received all the Old Testament saints into heaven, before the price of their redemption was paid; and upon the credit of the Father, the Son, nearly seventeen hundred years ago, paid the full price of the redemption of the elect, while vast multitudes of them were not as yet born into the world, and many of them are not even to this day.

It is true, the parties contracted for are fallible: but then the performing of the condition of this covenant, as such, doth in no case lie upon them; Christ having taken it entirely on himself, and accordingly performed it already. While they continue in their natural state, without Christ, they are personally in the covenant of works, not in the covenant of grace. And being once become believers in Christ, the promise of the covenant of grace stands always entire to them, notwithstanding of all their failures; and must needs stand so, in virtue of the condition of the covenant already performed, and judicially sustained, as performed by Jesus Christ for them. And though they are fallible in respect of their actions, as long as they are in this world; yet from the moment of their union with Christ by faith, they are not fallible in respect of

their state: they can no more fall from their state of grace, than the saints in heaven can. Hence, even in their case, there is no place for the curse, or eternal wrath, the only penalty by which they should lose their right to the promise of the covenant. They are indeed liable to God's fatherly anger and chastisements for their sins: but forasmuch as by these there is no intercision of their right to the promise; and that they are not vindictive, but medicinal; they cannot be accounted a proper penalty of the covenant of grace, however they may be improperly so called; but do really belong to the promissory part, and administration of the covenant, Psalm lxxxix. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34; Isa. xxvii. 9; Heb. xii. 5, 6, 7. Where the condition of a covenant is fully performed, and legally sustained as such, in favour of the party who is to receive the benefit promised, it is evident there can be no more place for a proper penalty of the covenant on that side: and so it is here in the case of believers.

And thus we have dispatched the third head, namely, the parts of the covenant.

HEAD IV.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

It remains now to consider the administration of the covenant. And since the salvation of sinners doth entirely depend on this covenant; and that all the dispensations of God toward them, for carrying on and completing that gracious design, are regulated according to it: and since withal it is in itself the deepest secret, being a compact entered into betwixt the Father and the Son, before the world began: it is altogether necessary, that there be an administration of it, whereby it may be rendered effectual to the end for which it was made. And hereof we will have a view, by considering, 1. The party on whom the administration of the covenant is devolved; 2. The object of the administration; 3. The ends of it; and, 4. The nature of it. Of all which in order.

I. CHRIST THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE COVENANT.

Such is the nature of the thing, the weight and importance of this administration, that none who was not fit to be a party-contractor in the covenant, could be meet to be intrusted therewith. Where-

fore the administration of the covenant was devolved upon no mere man nor angel, but on the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam: and he hath it by the covenant itself, as a reward of his work. It was therein made over to him by promise; particularly, by the promise of a glorious exaltation, to be the Father's honorary servant, prime minister of heaven, mentioned before, and now to be more fully and distinctly unfolded. It was for this cause the last Adam was made a quickening spirit, as saith the text, 1 Cor. xv. 45, with which we shall compare the promise,

Isa. xlix. 8, "I will—give thee for a covenant of the people."

These are the Father's words to Christ the second Adam, the great surety-servant, chosen to make reparation of the injury done to the honour of God by the spiritual Israel, ver. 3; the light of the Gentiles, ver. 6, which is none other but he, Luke ii. 32; Acts xiii. 47; whose appearing in the world made the acceptable time, the day of salvation, as in the preceding part of this 8th verse, compared with 2 Cor. vi. 2. And they are a promise made to him of a reward of his work, in fulfilling the condition of the covenant by his obedience and death: for they are immediately subjoined to the promise of assistance therein; I will preserve thee, (namely, in the course of thy obedience, doing and dying, so that thou shalt not be utterly swallowed up of death, but swim through these deepest waters safe ashore,) and give thee for a covenant of the people; or simply, of people. Not that Christ was never given for a covenant of the people till he rose from the dead; nay, he was so given immediately after the fall, Gen. iii. 15: but that it was always upon the view, and in consideration of his obedience and death he was so given; and that he was at his resurrection and ascension solemnly invested with that office.

This giving, according to the scripture-phraseology, imports a divine constitution or settlement. So it is said, ver. 6, "I will give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my salvation unto the end of the earth;" *i. e.* I will constitute or set thee for a light: even as God set (Heb. gave) the sun and moon in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth, Gen. i. 17. Thus the people making or appointing a captain, are said to give a head or captain, Numb. xiv. 4; Neh. ix. 17. Wherefore, to give Christ for a covenant of the people, is to constitute or make him the covenant; whereby the people, any people, Jews or Gentiles, may become God's people, and receive all the benefits of that covenant-relation to God. This then speaks Jesus Christ to be the ordinance of God for the reconciliation of sinners to God, and their partaking of all the benefits of the covenant: even as the sun is the ordinance

of heaven for light to the world, unto whose light all have free access; though in the meantime it doth not enlighten the blind, nor those who will needs live in darkness, because they hate the light. This honour was secured to him in the promissory part of the covenant, in consideration of his fulfilling the conditionary part thereof.

Now, that Christ is by the authority of heaven constituted or made the covenant, imports these two things. (1.) He is constituted administrator of the covenant: as he had the burden of purchasing the promised benefits, so he hath the honour of distributing and conferring them on sinners. This meaning of the phrase appears from the following words, declaring the end of this constitution; to "establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;" ver. 9, "That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth." See chap. xlii. 6, 7. (2.) The whole of the covenant is in him: so that he that hath Christ, hath the covenant, the whole of the covenant; he that hath not Christ, hath no saving part or lot in it. This is the native import of this unusual phrase, occurring only here and chap. xlii. 6, and is confirmed by the following words, to establish the earth. A covenant is an establishing thing. When the first covenant was broken, the foundations of the earth were, so to speak, loosened, that it could no more stand firm, until Christ was given for a covenant, to establish it again: he bore up the pillars thereof, in virtue of the new covenant in himself. And if his administration of the covenant were once at an end on the earth, the earth will stand no longer, but be reduced to ashes. The saying concerning the sacramental cup, "This cup is the new testament in my blood," 1 Cor. xi. 25, is somewhat akin to the expression in the text, and serves to confirm the sense given of it. For it surely bears, (1.) That the sacramental cup is the ministration of the New Testament to believing receivers; so that receiving the one in faith they receive the other too. (2.) That the New Testament is in Christ's blood; so that their communion of the benefits of the testament, is by their communion of the blood of Christ, 1 Cor. x. 16.

Now, from these texts compared, it appears, That the administration of the covenant of grace is devolved on Jesus Christ the second Adam, for that end made a quickening spirit, having the whole of the covenant in him.

This constitution, lodging the administration of the covenant in the Mediator Christ Jesus, is at once suited to the glory of God, the case of sinners, and the honour of Christ himself.

1. It is suited to the glory of God the offended party. In the face of Jesus the administrator, shines forth the glory of the God of the covenant, 2 Cor. iv. 7. His spotless holiness, and tremendous jus-

tice, appear there; together with his matchless love, freest grace, and tenderest mercy. God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself, with the safety of his glory; giving forth his peace and pardons freely, without any merit of the receivers, and yet not without sufficient satisfaction to his justice, and compensation of his injured honour; as from a throne of grace, stablished upon justice satisfied, and judgment fully executed, the firm bases thereof.

2. It is suited to the case of sinners, the offending party. In Christ the administrator of the covenant, they have to do with a God, whose rays of majesty, that the guilty are not able to behold, are vailed with the robe of a spotless humanity. An inviting sweetness appears in the face of the administrator, "full of grace and truth," John i. 14. In him they may see their salvation so dear to the God that made them, that he himself would put on their nature, to establish, by his own blood, a covenant of peace between heaven and them. He is true man, of the same family of Adam with themselves; unto whom they may confidently draw near, joining themselves to him as the head of the covenant: and withal, he is the true God, undoubtedly able to make the covenant effectual for their salvation, notwithstanding all their unworthiness.

3. It is suited to the honour of Christ himself, the peace-maker, who hath it as the reward of his work. Joseph, being sold for a bond-servant, behaved himself with all meekness, patience, faithfulness in that low character; the which was afterwards, by all-ruling providence, abundantly rewarded with honour, in his being advanced to be the prime minister of the kingdom of Egypt, having the administration of the whole kingdom committed to him, Psalm cv. 17—22. Herein he was a type of Christ. The Lord Jesus did voluntarily submit himself to the lowest step of reproach and disgrace, taking upon him the form of a bond-servant, and humbling himself in that form, even unto the death of the cross; and that to perform the condition of the covenant, for the glory of God, and the salvation of his people: and therefore he was exalted to the highest pinnacle of honour, being advanced to the prime ministry of heaven, having the administration of the covenant put into his hand, ruling over all under his Father; whereby is given him a name which is above every name, whether of men or angels, "all things being put under his feet," Philip. ii. 7, 8, 9; Eph. i. 20—23. In respect hereof, he is often called the Father's servant, namely, his honorary servant: and his honour in that character is often promised to be made very great, Isa. xlix. 6, and lii. 13, 14, 15; Zech. iii. 8, with vi. 12, 13.

And forasmuch as the everlasting covenant will continue to be

the ground and rule of God's dispensations towards his people for evermore; by the constitution lodging the administration of the covenant in the person of Christ, he is to enjoy that honour and dignity for ever and ever. For "unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," Heb. i. 8. Even of his kingdom which is given him, that is, his mediatory kingdom and administration there shall be no end, Luke i. 32, 33. The time comes indeed, wherein he will "deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father; presenting to him at the last day, the whole church, and every member thereof, brought by his administration, according to his commission, into a state of perfection. And then cometh the end, 1 Cor. xv. 24, namely, the end of the world, but not the end of his administration: for being constituted administrator of the covenant, "there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom; and his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away," (as the world shall, 1 Cor. vii. 31), "and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed," (as all the four monarchies have been), Dan. vii. 14.

And thus we have seen Christ to be the party on whom the administration of the covenant is devolved.

II. SINNERS OF MANKIND THE OBJECT OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COVENANT.

The object of the administration of the covenant, is, sinners of mankind indefinitely: that is to say, Christ is empowered, by commission from his Father, to administrate the covenant of grace to any of all mankind, the sinners of the family of Adam without exception: he is authorized to receive them into the covenant, and to confer on them all the benefits thereof, to their eternal salvation; according to the settled order of the covenant. The election of particular persons is a secret, not to be discovered in the administration of the covenant, according to the established order thereof, till such time as the sinner have received the covenant, by coming personally into it. And the extent of the administration is not founded on election, but on the sufficiency of Christ's obedience and death for the salvation of all; neither is it regulated thereby, but by the fulness of power in heaven and earth given to Jesus Christ, as a reward of his becoming obedient even unto death.

For confirming this truth, let the following things be considered.

1. The grant which the Father hath made of Christ crucified, as his ordinance for the salvation of lost sinners of mankind. In the

case of the Israelites in the wilderness, bitten by fiery serpents, God instituted an ordinance for their cure, namely, a brazen serpent lifted up on a pole; and made a grant thereof to whosoever would use it for that purpose, by looking to it. No body whosoever that needed healing, was excepted: the grant was conceived in the most ample terms, Numb. xxi. 8, "It shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live." So all mankind being bitten by the old serpent, the devil, and sin, as his deadly poison, left in them; God hath appointed Jesus Christ the ordinance of heaven for their salvation. There is a word of divine appointment passed upon a crucified Christ, making and constituting him the ordinance of God for salvation of sinners; and God hath made a grant of him as such, to whomsoever of Adam's lost race will make use of him for that purpose, by believing on him; in the which grant none of the world of mankind is excepted. All this is clear from John iii. 14, 15, 16, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have eternal life. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Now, the administration of the covenant being settled in pursuance of this grant therein made for a reward of the Mediator's obedience, the object of the former can be no less extensive than that of the latter.

2. The Mediator's commission for the administration, is conceived in the most ample terms; and he is clothed with most ample powers with relation to that business. It carries his administering the covenant, not only to the meek, the poor, the broken-hearted; but to the captives, blind, bruised, prisoners, bond-men and broken men, who have sold their inheritance and themselves, and can have no hope of relief but by a jubilee, Luke iv. 18, 19; with Isa. lxi. 1, 2. What sort of sinners of mankind can one imagine, that will not fall in under some of these denominations? Christ is indeed given for a covenant of people; not of this or that people, but of people indefinitely. "All power is given him in heaven and in earth," Matth. xxviii. 18. So there are none on earth excepted from his administering the covenant to them. He is empowered to save the guilty law-condemned world, by administering it to them; "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved," John iii. 17; forasmuch as he is the ordinance of God for taking away the sin of the world, chap. i. 29; though many to whom he offers the covenant, do refuse it, and so are not saved eventually. Accordingly, from this fulness of

power he issues forth the general offer of the gospel; wherein all without exception are declared welcome to come and suck of the full breasts of the divine consolations in the covenant: Matth. xi. 27, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." Ver. 28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Chap. xxviii. 18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Ver. 19, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations." Mark xvi. 15, "Preach the gospel to every creature."

3. He executes his commission in an unhampered manner, administering the covenant to any sinner of mankind: Prov. viii. 4, "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man." The object of his administration is not this or that party of mankind, under this or the other denomination; but men, any men, sons of men indefinitely. So the gospel, in which he administers the covenant, is good tidings to all people, Luke ii. 10, a feast made unto all people, Isa. xxv. 6, though many, not relishing the tidings, never taste of the feast. Accordingly, he commissioned his apostles for that effect, in terms than which none can imagine more extensive, Mark xvi. 15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The Jews called man the creature, as being God's creature by way of eminence: so by every creature is meant every man. There are in the world, some men, who, by reason of their monstrous wickedness, are like devils; there are other men, who, by reason of their savageness seem to differ but little from brutes: but our Lord saith here in effect, "Be what they will, if ye can but know them to be men, ask no questions about them on this head, what sort of men they are: being men, preach the gospel to them, offer them the covenant; and if they receive it, give them the seals thereof: my Father made them, I will save them."

4. If we inquire, who they are to whom Christ stands related as a Saviour? or, whose Saviour he is, according to the scripture? we find, that considered as an actual Saviour, saving actually and eventually, he is indeed only Saviour of the body, Eph. v. 23; but considered as an official Saviour, a Saviour by office, he is the Saviour of the world, 1 John iv. 14; John iv. 42. Thus one having a commission to be the physician of a society, is the physician of the whole society, by office; and so stands related to every man of them, as his physician: howbeit, he is not actually a healer to any of them, but such as employ him. Though some of that society should not employ him at all, but on every occasion call another physician; yet he is still their physician by office: though they should die of their disease, being averse from calling him; yet still it is true, that he was their physician, they might have called him, and had his reme-

dies; and it was purely their own fault, that they were not healed by him. Even so our Lord Jesus Christ hath Heaven's patent, constituting him the Saviour of the world; by the authority of his Father he is invested with that office: and wheresoever the gospel comes, his patent for that effect is intimated, 1 John iv. 14, "And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." Wherefore, none of us shall perish for want of a Saviour. Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world; he is your Saviour, and my Saviour, be our case what it will: and God, in and by him, is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe, 1 Tim. iv. 10. Hence Christ's salvation is the common salvation, Jude 3.: and the gospel is the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men, Tit. ii. 11, marg. Christ then stands related as a Saviour by office to the world of mankind; he is their Saviour: and he is so related to every one of them, as sinners, lost sinners of that society, 1 Tim. i. 15, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Luke xix. 10, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." Let no man say, "Alas! I have nothing to do with Christ, nor he with me; for I am a sinner, a lost sinner." Nay, upon that very ground there is a relation between him and you. Since you are a sinner of mankind, Christ is your Saviour: for he is by office Saviour of the family whereof you are a branch. If you will employ another than him, or pine away in your disease, rather than put yourself in his hand, ye do it upon your peril: but know assuredly, that you have a Saviour of your own, chosen of God for you, whether you employ him or not. He is by his Father's appointment the physician of souls: ye are the sick; and the less sensible ye are, the more dangerously sick; there is a valuable relation then betwixt Christ and you, as such, Matth. ix. 11, 12. He is the great burden-bearer, that gives rest to them that labour and are heavy laden, Matth. xi. 28; Psalm li. 22. Ye labour, spending your labour for that which satisfied not: and are laden with iniquity, even heavy laden; and nothing the less so, that ye are not duly sensible thereof: there is a relation then betwixt Christ and you, on that very score. Now, if Christ stands related to the world of mankind-sinners, as their Saviour, then they are the object of his administration of the covenant.

b. Lastly, If it were not so, then there would be some excepted persons of the world of mankind-sinners, for whom there is no warrant, more than for devils, to take hold of the covenant, by believing in Christ: contrary to the constant voice of the gospel, John iii. 16; Mark xvi. 15. For surely they have no warrant to take hold of the covenant, to whom the Administrator is not empowered to give it.

Which of the world of mankind-sinners can these excepted persons be? Not pagans, and other infidels, who hear not the gospel: for howbeit, in the depth of sovereign wisdom, that warrant is not intimated to them; yet it doth really extend to them; as included under that general term, whosoever, John iii. 16. And if it did not extend to them, the covenant could not lawfully be preached and offered to them by ministers of the gospel; more than a crier could lawfully go and proclaim and offer the king's indemnity to those who have no concern in it, but are excepted out of it. The ministerial gospel-offer is undoubtedly null and void, as far as it exceeds the bounds of the object of Christ's administration of the covenant; as being, in so far, from one or more having no power to make it. Neither are any who hear the gospel excepted: for the not taking hold of the covenant by faith in Christ, is the great sin and condemnation of all who, having the gospel, do so entertain it, Prov. viii. 36; John iii. 19; Mark xvi. 16. But it could not be the sin of such persons; because it can never be one's sin, not to do a thing which he hath no warrant from God to do. Much less are the non-elect excepted: for at that rate, not only should their unbelief be none of their sin; but the elect themselves could never believe, till such time as their election were, in the first place, revealed to them, which is contrary to the stated method of grace: for none can believe in Christ, till once they see their warrant; forasmuch as that warrant is the ground of faith.

Wherefore we conclude, that sinners of mankind indefinitely are the object of Christ's administration of the covenant; that he is empowered to administer it to you, and every one of you, whatever you are, or have been; and that you must either take hold of the covenant for life and salvation, or perish as despisers of it, since ye have heard the gospel.

III. The ends of the administration of the covenant.

The ends of the administration of the covenant, which make the business of the Administrator as such, are these three: to wit, (1.) the bringing of sinners into the covenant; (2.) the management of them therein, according to it, in this world; and, (3.) the completing of their happiness, according to it, in the other world.

1. The bringing of sinners personally and savingly into the covenant, Isa. xlix. 5, "And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb, to be his servant, to bring Jacob again unto him, though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord." Though the covenant was concluded from eternity, when we could neither consent nor dissent; yet, by the constitution thereof, it is

provided, that, even to the end of time, any sinner of the race of Adam, who shall believe, his receiving and embracing the covenant by faith, shall be as good and valid to enter him into it, as if he had personally subscribed it at the making thereof, John iii. 16. Thus it is left open to mankind-sinners, that they may come into it, taking place therein under Christ the head; and so become personally confederate with Heaven, to their eternal salvation. And there is room enough within the compass of the infinite name of the second Adam, for all of us to subscribe our little names. Wherefore, notwithstanding of all that have already subscribed, in that name, saying, "I am the Lord's," *i.e.* the Lord Christ's, Isa. xliv. 5, since Eve first set down her name there, by believing the promise first, whereby she then commenced, and actually was the mother of all living, Gen. iii. 20; yet the voice of the gospel still is, and will be even to the end, "And yet there is room," Luke xiv. 22. For typifying which Noah's ark was, by the appointment of Heaven, made all little rooms, Gen. vi. 14, called in the margin there, nests. Now, the Mediator is authorised to treat with sinners, rebels to God, and subjects of Satan's kingdom, to bring them over to Heaven's side again; and for that effect to administer the covenant unto them, to propose it to them, and gather them into the bond thereof. Wherefore, having gone forth on that errand, he testifies his earnestness in the work, Matth. xxiii. 37, "How often would I have gathered thy children!" and declares himself the door of the sheep, John x. 7, 9.

2. The management of them in the covenant, according to it, during their continuance in this world. When sinners are, by the Mediator's administration, brought within the bond of the covenant, they are not thenceforth trusted with the management of themselves and their stock: but their stock being lodged with him, they are put under his hand as their sole manager, the chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls, unto whose oversight the strays once returned are committed, 1 Pet. ii. 25. Whatever they need, they must receive from him: he is to dispense all the benefits of the covenant, of whatever kind, unto them. Are they to be justified? he is to pass the sentence, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," Matt. ix. 2, 6. Are they to be brought into a new saving relation to God? he is to give them power to become the sons of God, John i. 12. Are they to be sanctified? he is to wash, sanctify, and cleanse them, John xiii. 8; Eph. v. 26; and to give them repentance, as well as forgiveness of sins, Acts v. 31. Are they to be caused to persevere? he is to keep them, and to account for each one of them to his Father, John xvii. 12. Are they to be seen to in all their temporal concerns? the

care of them all lies upon him, 1 Pet. v. 7. He is our Joseph, who hath all the stores of the covenant in his hand: and of him God hath said, as Pharaoh said to his famishing people crying unto him for bread, "Go to Joseph," Gen. xli. 55. Moreover, they must receive all their orders from him, touching their duty in all points. They must receive the law at his mouth; since it is by him God speaks unto them, according to the constitution of the covenant: for which cause God hath given a solemn charge to all the covenant-people, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him," Matt. xvii. 5.

3. And *lastly*, The completing of their happiness, according to the covenant, in the other world: Eph. v. 27, "That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing." It is the comfort of believers, that Jesus Christ administers the covenant in this world; so that whatever part thereof they may be driven to, they can never be driven to any part unto which his administration doth not extend. Howbeit, the most glorious part of his administration takes its place in the other world: for it is in heaven, that the promises of the covenant have their perfect accomplishment: the which makes heaven home to believers. "O! but the passage betwixt the two worlds is a dark, dangerous, and gloomy one! Who can without horror think of the Jordan of death, and the darksome region of the grave!" But withal, God's covenant-people should remember, that their Lord hath business in that passage, as well as on either side of it. The line of the covenant is drawn through it, making a path by which the redeemed safely pass. So there also is the scene of Christ's administration of the covenant; he hath the keys of hell and of death, Rev. i. 18. It is great weakness, to think that he doth only, as it were, stand on the other side of the river, directing the believer in his passage, and ready to receive him when he comes ashore: nay, it lies on him, as administrator of the covenant, even to go into the water with the passenger, to take him by the arm, and going between him and the stream, to break the force thereof unto him, and to bring him safe ashore: Psalm xxiii. 4, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." In the Israelites passing over to Canaan, the ark went first into Jordan, and was last in coming out, being there till all the people were passed clean over, Josh. chap. iii. iv. The ark being a type of Christ, as Canaan was of heaven, this teacheth us, that our Lord Jesus will have business in the passage between the two worlds, as long as there is one of his people to pass that way; and that his administration there will never be at an end, until the last man

within the bond of the covenant is safely landed on the other side. This done, he is to administer the covenant to them there also, completing their happiness by a perfect accomplishment of all the promises thereof unto them. As Jesus is the author, so he is the finisher of our faith, Heb. xii. 2. In which texts there is an allusion to the races famous among the ancient Greeks, wherein there was one that opened the race, ran it, and went on the head of all the rest; another who was set on a throne at the end of the race, and gave the prize to such as won it. In the spiritual race, Christ acts both these parts. As performer of the condition of the covenant, in the course of his obedience, wherein he endured the cross, despising the shame, he is the author of our faith, or the chief leader, expressly called the forerunner, chap. vi. 20, in bringing many sons unto glory, going on their head as captain or chief leader, chap. ii. 10. Then, as administrator of the covenant, he is the finisher of our faith, or the perfecter that gives the crown to the runners, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. And thus it is his business to put the crown of glory on the heads of those whom by his grace he hath made conquerors. From his hand Paul expected it, 2 Tim. iv. 8, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge," to wit, Christ, the judge of the world, "shall give me at that day." To him it belongs to grant to the overcomers to sit with him in his throne, Rev. iii. 21. And therefore I cannot help thinking, that the text, Matt. xx. 23, may safely be read without the supplement, "To sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but for whom it is prepared of my Father." So the particle but is used exceptively, 2 Cor. ii. 5, for save, Mark ix. 8. The fulness of power given to the Mediator, comprehends all power in heaven, as well as in earth: accordingly he prepares the place for his several people in his Father's house, having the whole at his disposal as administrator of the covenant. And he is to administer the covenant to them, not only at their first entrance into the regions of bliss, but all along through the ages of eternity, being to remain the eternal bond of union and mean of communication betwixt God and the saints for ever, Heb. vii. 25; Rev. vi. 17.

And these are the ends of the administration of the covenant. Follows,

IV. THE NATURE OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COVENANT.

The nature of this administration offers itself to our view, in the relations Christ hath to the covenant as he is administrator thereof.

We have already seen, how that Christ became the Mediator of the covenant, both substantial and official; and have observed, that his official mediation runs through the whole of the covenant; and we have taken notice of a threefold relation of his unto it, namely, his being 1. The Kinsman-redeemer in it; 2. The Surety of it; and, 3. The Priest, the sacrificing priest, of it; the which parts of his mediation, respecting the condition of the covenant, do belong to the making of it. We shall now consider his other relations thereto, bearing those parts of his mediation, which, respecting the promises of the covenant, do belong to the administration of it. And they are these five. 1. He is the Trustee of the covenant; 2. The Testator of the covenant: 3. The Prophet of the covenant; 4. The King of the covenant; and 5. The Intercessor of the covenant: each of which is a syllable of the name above every name, given him of the Father, as the reward of his work. And in viewing these in order, the nature of the administration of the covenant will plainly appear.

I. CHRIST THE TRUSTEE OF THE COVENANT.

Our Lord Jesus as administrator, is, in the first place, the Trustee of the covenant; having the covenant, and all the benefits thereof, committed to his trust: Col. i. 19, "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell." This greatest of all trusts, too great for any mere man or angel, our blessed Redeemer was perfectly qualified for; and so was set over the house of God, the most precious things thereof being put under his hand. What is sealed up from the highest angel, he hath access to; he is trusted to loose the seals, for he is worthy, Rev. v. 2—5. A holy jealous God put no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly: for they were fallible; there was a possibility of their betraying their trust, Job iv. 18. But it pleased him to trust the blessed Jesus, that in him, as an infallible administrator, all fulness should dwell.

This high trust was a necessary prerequisite of the administration: and therefore, upon his engagement to fulfil the condition of the covenant, reputed in heaven as sure as if it had been actually performed, all the benefits of the covenant were not only made over to him in point of right, but were delivered over into his hand in actual possession, that he might dispense them to sinners, according to the method therein stated and agreed upon: John iii. 35, "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand." Matth. xi. 27, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." Ver. 28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden,

and I will give you rest." Hence it was that he entered upon the administration of the covenant, long before his incarnation; even as soon as there was any place for the administering thereof, which was in paradise after the fall: though the solemnity of his investiture and taking possession, was reserved unto his ascension into heaven, when the man Christ was set at God's right hand, Gen. iii. 8, 15; with Psalm lxviii. 18; Eph. i. 20—22.

Thus the fulness of the covenant is in him: and this trust makes the unsearchable riches of Christ, not to be particularly inventoried by us, since they are unsearchable. But, agreeable to what hath been said before, we shall, for opening thereof, mark the following things:—

1. The unseen guard of the covenant is under his hand. There is given unto him all power over natural and spiritual things, to manage the same for the preservation, protection, and restraint of those sometime to be brought into the covenant; while yet they are strangers from it, and neither perceive the guard about them, nor the commander thereof: John v. 22, "The Father—hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Hos. xi. 3, "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms, but they knew not that I healed them." Sometimes they are, during their state of blindness, in eminent hazard of their lives, and narrowly escape, before the stream of strong temptations threatening to carry them quite away; and yet the force of these is broken one way or other, and they brought back from the very brink of ruin; and they never truly know, whose debtors they are for these things, nor see the love-design in them, until converting grace has reached them; and then they hear the captain of that guard saying to them, as he said to Cyrus, Isa. xlv. 5, "I girded thee, though thou hast not known me." So the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire, for the defence of Elisha and his servant; while yet the servant saw none for them, but against them, until the Lord opened his eyes, 2 Kings vi. 17.

2. The quickening Spirit of the covenant is in him, whereby to quicken dead sinners, and cause them to live. The Spirit of life behoved to be purchased for sinners, otherwise there was no life for them. Now, the fulness thereof is purchased, and actually lodged in the Mediator, according to the covenant. Hence Christ proposeth himself to dead Sardis, as having the seven spirits of God, Rev. iii. 1; and saith to the Jews, John v. 25, "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God;" that is, dead souls shall be quickened, and being quickened, shall believe. The first Adam being made a living soul, was capable to communicate natural life; but not being made a quickening spirit, he could not restore life once lost: but

the last Adam was made a quickening spirit, to restore spiritual life to sinners dead in trespasses and sins. So, in Christ as the Trustee of the covenant, is the fountain of life. Adam's sin put out the lights of the whole world; and his natural offspring were all left by him as so many blind candles: but the second Adam is made, and set up, a flaming lamp to light them again; and as many of them as it toucheth, do instantly flame too: and could they all but touch it, and none are forbidden, they should all be lighted again, and shine with the light of spiritual life, partaking of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

3. The righteousness of the covenant is in him, whereby to justify the ungodly that have no righteousness of their own. Hence his name is, "The Lord our righteousness," Jer. xxiii. 6. Righteousness of man before the Lord was quite worn out: there was nothing of that kind left upon any of Adam's children, "as it is written, there is none righteous, no not one," Rom. iii. 10. But Jesus Christ having, in his birth, life, and death, wrought out the righteousness of the new covenant, brought it in, and presented it unto his Father, Dan. ix. 24, with Lev. xvi. 15. And it was sustained and accepted as the new-covenant righteousness, for justifying all that believe; and was lodged with the worker thereof, intrusted with it as Administrator of the covenant. Hence he is said to be made unto us righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30, namely, by a divine constitution, even as he was made the covenant. And intimation hereof is made unto sinners in the gospel, for a ground of faith, Isa. xlv. 24, "Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness," Heb. Only in the Lord (concerning me he hath said) is righteousness. They are the words of the Lord Jesus Christ, narrating the divine constitution concerning himself. Compare ver. 23; with Rom. xlv. 10, 11. Wherefore, the gospel is called the ministration of righteousness, 2 Cor. iii. 9; and his ministers, ministers of righteousness, chap. xi. 15; he being intrusted with the new covenant righteousness, for to administer it to sinners, unto justification of life, as the phrase is, Rom. v. 18.

4. The new covenant right to God is in his person as Mediator: and he is actually possessed of the fulness of the Godhead, as he is administrator of the covenant, to communicate of that fulness to all that shall believe, Col. ii. 9, "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Ver. 10, "And ye are complete in him, which is the head." Our Lord Jesus, as the eternal Son of God, had a natural indefeasible right to the fulness of the Godhead: but as the second Adam, he took out a new right thereto, purchasing the same by his obedience and death; and as such, it is now lodged

with him, to be communicated by him. And thus the peace of the covenant, peace with God, is in him, Eph. ii. 14; the sonship of the covenant, the adoption into the family of God, is in him as the first-born among many brethren, Psalm lxxxix. 27; with John i. 12; the covenant interest in God as one's own God, is in him, John xx. 17. And to obtain all these in one, let the sinner but receive Christ by faith, and he hath them; for they are all under his hand as trustee of the covenant, yea, in him as the storehouse of the covenant.

5. The covenant fulness of the Spirit of sanctification is in him, whereby to make sinners holy: Col. i. 19, "It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell." John i. 16, "And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Having purchased the same with his own blood, it is lodged in him as administrator of the covenant, in respect of which he is said to be made unto us sanctification, 1 Cor. i. 30. Therefore out of his pierced side came there forth blood and water; blood to remove the guilt of sin, water to wash away the defilement thereof. So he is the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness: not a vessel of that water of purification, which, how full soever, would lack as much as it should communicate; but a fountain, a living spring of it, to supply the needs of the unclean, without any lack in itself: "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him," John iii. 34. Wherefore there is in him such a fulness of the Spirit of holiness, as is, by the infinite efficacy thereof sufficient to sanctify the whole family of Adam, and even the worst of them. There is a fulness of all grace in him, to be communicated for the repairing of the lost image of God in us. There is grace enough in him to melt the hardest heart into evangelical repentance, Acts v. 31, to mortify the strongest lusts, Gal. v. 24, and to quicken, and to strengthen unto holy obedience, 2 Tim. ii. 1.

6. The establishing grace of the covenant is in him, whereby to cause the most fickle and inconstant, once in him, to persevere unto the end: Jude, ver. 1, "Them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ." He is constituted the head of influences for all his mystical members, which are to have their nourishment ministered from him, Col. ii. 19. The giving out of continued pardons, necessary for them in this their state of imperfection, is also in his hand, as the Trustee of the covenant, "exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31. Thus he is fully furnished for preserving them in a state of grace, having a fulness of grace in himself to communicate unto them, suitable to all their exigencies, whether in respect of the power, or of the guilt of their sin.

7. The temporal things of the covenant are all in his hand, whereby to provide for, and afford protection to his people, during their continuance in this world. In the covenant there was made to him a promise of his inheriting all things, as the first-born of the family of Heaven; and in his person as the last Adam, the ancient dominion over the creatures was restored, as we heard before. Now, as he is the Trustee of the covenant, the heritage of the world, and all things therein, is actually delivered over into his hand: so that he is not only Lord of the world in point of right, but in fact; having the power of all therein, from the smallest rag for covering of nakedness, even to the crowns and sceptres. This he himself witnesseth, Matt. xxviii. 18, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Chap. xi. 27, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." Hence to encourage his impoverished people in their building of the second temple, he saith, Hag. ii. 8, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine," namely, to give them to whom I will. And that these are Christ's words, appears from ver. 6, compared with Heb. xii. 26. Accordingly, from Psalm xxiv. 1, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," the apostle clears believers' right to the creatures, 1 Cor. x. 25, 26. And thus he is fully furnished for affording all manner of provision to his people, in temporal things: and all protection from whatever dangers they can be in while here. The sun, moon, and stars, the earth, sea, and air, with all that in them is, are under his hand as the Trustee of the covenant; and he can dispose of them all for the ends of the covenant, as the glory of God and the welfare of his people do require.

8. The covenant-fulness of power over death and the grave is in his hand, whereby to disarm death of its sting, and bring about a glorious resurrection. "I," saith he, "have the keys of hell and of death," Rev. i. 18. Death goes through the world as a mighty conqueror, whom none is able to resist; the grave follows, and none can keep back its prey, nor cause it to give it up again. But the Mediator hath an effectual check upon them both. They are not absolute potentates, as mighty as they are: there is one above them, to whose orders they must precisely stick. Death may indeed enter in within the boundaries of the covenant, and carry off the covenant-people as well as others: but at the border it must drop its sting, and enter without it; for the power of death is now in Christ's hand, and he will not suffer it to enter there with it. And the time cometh wherein he will say to the grave, Give up: and then the bars thereof will be broken asunder, the gates thereof fly open, and it will deliver up to him its lodgers; for he is intrusted as administrator of the covenant, with full power over death and the grave.

9. *Lastly*, The eternal consummate happiness of the covenant is in his hand, whereby to render the souls of his people happy immediately after death, and then soul and body together happy at the last day: for all power in heaven is given him. The Father hath made him the great repository of eternal life, the fountain from whence it shall stream forth to all the heirs of life; and the dispensing of it is intrusted to him: 1 John v. 11, "God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son." John xvii. 2, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." Wherefore his dying people do in faith commit their souls to him, as Stephen, Acts vii. 59, "Saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And at the last day he pronounceth the sentence, and solemnly receives them into the kingdom of heaven, Matth. xxv. 34.

And thus Christ is the Trustee of the covenant.

II. CHRIST THE TESTATOR OF THE COVENANT.

In the next place, our Lord Jesus is the Testator of the covenant, as the apostle teacheth, Heb. ix. 15—17. By the conditionary part of the covenant, God had a compensation of the wrong done to his glory by sinners: and by the promissory part, Christ had unsearchable riches to communicate unto them, whereby they might be made happy, and being to die in the cause, according to his covenant, he timely made his testament, as a deed of conveyance thereof unto them; turning the promissory part of the covenant respecting lost sinners, into a testament in their favour, 1 Cor. xi. 25, "This cup is the new testament in my blood."

Hence it appears, that this belongs to the administration of the covenant, committed unto him, for making sinners partakers of the covenant-benefits; yea, and that it is the first and fundamental act of that his administration, laid as a foundation of all the other acts thereof, which are but so many means of executing the testament. Upon the Mediator's undertaking to fulfil the condition of the covenant, the Father made to him a disposition of the covenant-benefits contained in the promissory part: and the benefits so disponed, were actually delivered over into his hand, as the appointed trustee of the covenant, as we have already seen. Now, he having them all thus in his hand, hath made a disposition of them to poor sinners, by way of testament, Luke xxii. 29, "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." Or, "and I dispone to you, as my Father disponed to me, a kingdom." The word here used, signifies to dispone; and hath in it the notion of a

federal or covenant disposition, and a testamentary disposition too. Of the former sort was the disposition made by the Father to Christ, namely, a federal disposition; as being made on a most onerous cause, a condition properly so called, to wit, his making his soul an offering for sin: and it can by no means be a testamentary disposition, since "where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator," Heb. ix. 16; the which, it is evident, could have no place in the case of the Father. Of the latter sort is the disposition made by Jesus Christ to sinners, namely, a testamentary disposition, which, of its own nature, is a deed or conveyance of grace and liberality, without conditions properly so called: and forasmuch as sinners were under an utter disability to perform conditions properly so called, it was therefore necessary for their behoof, to make it a testamentary disposition or testament.

For clearing of the nature of this testament, which is of so great importance for all to know, who have any concern for their salvation, we shall consider, 1. The making thereof; 2. The legatees; 3. The executor; and, 4. The legacies.

First, As to the making of Christ's testament, it is first of all to be observed, that though the covenant was indeed from eternity, the testament was not so. For Christ made his testament as administrator of the covenant; which administration he did not enter upon but in time. He was from eternity the trustee of the covenant, which grand trust was a necessary prerequisite of his administration: yet forasmuch as his commencing testator of the covenant was an act of his administration thereof, there could be no place for it until there was place for administering the covenant, which there was not, till once the covenant of works was broken. And hereto best agreeth the nature of a testament, which is not simply a will, but a will declared, testified, and signified by word or writ, or some one or other external sign pleadable by the legatees, in order to their obtaining of the legacies bequeathed.

Christ's testament, which for substance is but one, is yet twofold, in respect of different circumstances wherewith it hath been vested; namely, the old or first testament, and the new testament, 2 Cor. iii. 14; Heb. ix. 15.

Christ's old testament is the declaration of the last will of our dying Saviour, touching his unsearchable riches, confirmed by slain sacrifices of divine institution, sealed with the seals of circumcision and the passover, and enduring in the church till the fulness of time, and the manifestation of himself to Israel in the flesh, Heb. ix. 20; Rom. iv. 11; 1 Cor. v. 7; Luke xvi. 16. This his testament was originally made by word of mouth; which kind of testament is called

a nuncupative testament: but it was afterwards committed to writing; so that there was not only a word of the testament to be heard, but a book of the testament to be read, by the legatees, Heb. ix. 19, 20. And so we have it a written testament, in that part of the holy scripture called by the name of the Old Testament.

Christ's new testament is the declaration of the same last will of our dying Saviour, touching his unsearchable riches, confirmed by his own death on the cross, sealed with the seals of baptism and the Lord's supper, and to continue for evermore, 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25; Matth. xxviii. 19; Heb. vii. 12, 16, 17. This also was originally made by word of mouth, in the time of his public ministry, wherein he declared his will anent the great salvation, which, as the apostle observes, at first began to be spoken by the Lord, Heb. ii. 3. And it was in like manner afterwards committed to writing: and we have it too a written testament, in that part of the holy scripture called by the name of the New Testament.

If we look for the original date of Christ's old or first testament, we find his testament to be of a date as early as the nature of the thing could bear, being made in paradise, on the day of Adam's fall, in the cool of the day, Gen. iii. 8, otherwise called the time between the two evenings, Exod. xii. 6, that is between three and six o'clock in the afternoon. At the which time, our Lord Jesus did, in the promise of the seed of the woman to bruse the head of the serpent, which should bruise his heel, Gen. iii. 15, signify his death, and declare his will for the benefits of his purchase their accruing to sinners thereby. And that day I judge to have been the sixth day of the creation, the same day wherein man was created; reckoning that the scripture teacheth, that Adam lodged not one night in honour, as some do, agreeable to the original, read Psalm xlix. 12. They who cannot think that the events recorded from Gen. iii. 7, to the end of the third chapter, were crowded within the compass of one day, may weigh therewith the events relating to the death of Christ, which are recorded Luke xxii. 66, to the end chap. xxiii. 1.—33; John xix. 1; Matth. xxvii. 27, 28; John xix. 2, 5, 9—15; Matth. xxvii. 24. All which things were done in the space of half a day: for Christ was crucified about twelve of the clock, Luke xxxiii. 44—46.

Some, through an unwillingness to think of their death, do put off the making of their testaments unto a death-bed: but so very willing was Christ, the second Adam, to die for us, that he set his house in order, and so prepared himself for death, that very day wherein the first Adam fell. The business of the great King, and the business of the ruined world of mankind, required haste. The whole fabric

of the world was by Adam's fall so unhinged, that it was hastening to a total dissolution, and mankind about to perish in the ruins; till the second Adam went in, and bore up the pillars thereof, in virtue of his death to establish the earth again, Is. xlix. 8. Wherefore in paradise he made his testament in a few words, containing a disposition of the benefits of the covenant, in favour of poor sinners, Gen. iii. 15, and typically went in under that weight of wrath, which was pressing down all: and so he established the earth again. In this form it was, that they of the first ages of the world had the testament. But it was repeated and renewed to Abraham, to whom the promises were made, Gal. iii. 16, comprehended under the name of the covenants or testaments of promise, Eph. ii. 12. As also to Israel in the wilderness, whom Moses sprinkled with blood, "saying, This is the blood of the testament," Heb. ix. 19, 20. And this was Christ's old testament, upon which all that believed, from Adam to Christ, built their faith, and hope of obtaining the legacies left therein; though it was upwards of four thousand years, from the first making of the testament, unto the death of the Testator, by which the new testament was confirmed.

Now, the apostle saith that, "a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all whilst the testator liveth," Heb. ix. 7. Was Christ's testament then of no force all that time? Yea, it was of force; and that by means of a pre-confirmation, being confirmed before, Gal. iii. 17. The confirmation of a testament, in the sense of the holy scripture, is by the death of testator; as the apostle, in the forecited text, teacheth the Hebrews. And in scripture-reckoning, there was a twofold death of the Testator here: one typical, another real. In respect of the former of these Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. xiii. 8, having died typically in the sacrifices then offered, Gen. iii. 21, and thereafter all along under the Old Testament. And by that death of the Testator was the pre-confirmation of the testament: so that from the day it was first made, it was of force, for the legatees obtaining the legacies therein bequeathed; forasmuch as it was then also confirmed. Wherefore the apostle observes, that, in full consistency with that known maxim anent testaments, Heb. ix. 17, above-cited, "Neither the first testament was dedicated without blood," ver. 18. What the apostle means by the dedication of the testament, will be plain, if it is considered that what our version of the Bible calls dedication, is, in the scripture-use of words so rendered therein, nothing else but an entering on, or a first, or new using of a person or thing, to what they were designed for: insomuch that the very dedication of the temple was no more but that,

as appears by comparing 2 Chron. v. 13; chap. vi. and vii. 1, with 4. 5. Wherefore by the dedication of the testament, must be meant the legatees beginning to claim and obtain their legacies, upon the testament. And this, the apostle saith, was not done without the testament's being confirmed by blood, or death: the which, though really the blood or death of beasts sacrificed; yet, according to the apostle's reasoning, were reckoned the blood or death of the Testator, they being sacrificed as types of him.

And hence it appears, that whatever have been the different circumstances wherewith the testament in different periods hath been vested; the Old and New Testament, nuncupative and written, are for substance but the one testament of Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 8, having the same force and effect for full remission of sin and eternal salvation, legacies claimed and obtained by faith, in virtue of the testament, Acts xv. 11; Rom. iv. 13: only, what was first declared by word of mouth, the same was thereafter written. The legacies at first bequeathed in general comprehensive terms, were afterward particularly nominated: and in the New Testament they are more clearly expressed than in the Old. The former was a copy of the testament, fitted for the times before the testator really died: the latter, fitted for all times thereafter, to the end of the world; and therefore no other copy is to be accepted after it.

Secondly, It is to be inquired, Who are the legatees, the parties in whose favour the testament was made, and who may, in the method of the testament, claim and obtain the legacies therein bequeathed? Christ's making his testament, being the fundamental act of his administration of the covenant, as we have already seen; the legatees in the testament must needs be the same as the objects of his administration of the covenant, that is to say, sinners of mankind indefinitely: for if Christ is authorized by the Father to administer the covenant to sinners indefinitely, and hath accordingly made his testament for that effect; surely none can be excepted out of the testament, that are not excepted out of his administration. Therefore the apostle lays down, for the foundation of faith, to those who had even imbrued their hands in the blood of the Lord of glory, their interest in the promise, Acts ii. 39, "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." To whomsoever then the gospel comes, we may warrantably say the promise is to you, and to you, and every one of you; even the promise of the testament: and ye have access to claim it by faith, as your own legacy, your own mercy, Jon. ii. 8. And all the arguments adduced on the head of

the object of Christ's administration, which need not to be repeated here, do prove this.

And it is most agreeable to the nature of the thing. In Christ's testament, the legatees are not expressed by their names, as in testaments where the testator hath his children and friends about him, to whom he leaves his legacies: but it is here as in the case, wherein some of the children or friends of the testator are not come into the world at the time of the making of the testament; who must therefore have their legacies left to them under some general designation. Multitudes, multitudes of Christ's legatees were not born when he died; and multitudes of them have not to this day seen the sun: nay, when Christ first made his testament, there were but two persons in the world. Therefore the legatees have been expressed in it under a general designation, as those of such a family. Now, this general designation of the legatees in Christ's testament, is not actual believers, that is, such as have already believed: for actual believing is the legatees' claiming of the legacies left them; whereby they are put in possession thereof; the which claim must of necessity have a foundation in the testament prior unto it. And indeed the testament is the ground of faith. Therefore it was made before there was one actual believer in the world, being made in paradise, and there recited in the hearing of our guilty first parents, who, upon the hearing of it, Gen. iii. 15, believed, and so were put in possession of their legacies. And thus will it be to the end of the world: faith will come by hearing of the testament, Rom. x. 17; Gal. iii. 2. Neither is it the elect: for howbeit in them only is the testament effectual, yet it is not to them only the legacies are left; they are not the only persons in whose favour the testament was made. For election being a secret not to be known by us, until once we believe, cannot be the ground and warrant of believing, or embracing the testament, and claiming the legacies. Besides, at that rate, unbelievers continuing so to the end, could not be justly reckoned refusers and slighters of Christ's testament, as having no portion nor concern in it, more than fallen angels. But the general designation of the legatees in Christ's testament, is mankind sinners indefinitely: to those of the family of Adam are the legacies left, to be claimed and possessed of them by faith: Prov. viii. 4, "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man." Rev. xxii. 17, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." John vi. 37, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

Put the case, that a rich man should, for the love and favour he bears to a particular family, leave his substance to them by testament, to be divided among them: in this case, it is evident, that

however numerous that family be, all and every one of them are this man's legatees, howbeit their names are not particularly expressed in the testament; and they need no more to clear their claim, each to his share of the legacy, but that they are of that family. And upon the executors' making lawful intimation to that family, that, such a testament being made in favour of them, they come, claim, and get their legacies, in the method of the testament: it is manifest, that all of them, who accordingly come and make their claim, as members of that family, will obtain a share of the legacy: but in case there be any of them, who will not come and make any claim thereto, they will justly lose the benefit thereof, and may die of want for all the legacy that was left them in that testament. Our Lord Jesus Christ has made such a testament: the lost family of Adam, is the family constituted his legatees: and the gospel is the lawful intimation made to them, to come to the executor and receive their legacies. All that believe get the legacy; all unbelievers lose it, and perish under the want thereof; and they perish without all excuse. They cannot pretend, that there was nothing left them by the testator; which is the case of the fallen angels: nor yet, that it was not intimated unto them; which is the case of those that never heard the gospel. But they perish, because, howbeit there was a rich legacy left them, yet they undervalued the testator's kindness, and would never come and claim it by faith. Hence the benefits of the covenant of grace, even in respect of unbelievers, are called their own, namely, in virtue of the right they have to them by the tenor of Christ's testament: Jon. ii. 8, "They that observe lying vanities, forsake their own mercy." Accordingly, to the elder brother in the parable, Luke xv. the father saith, ver. 31, "Son, all that I have is thine." So chap. xvi. 12, "If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" that is, "the true riches," ver. 11. And their ruin is lodged at the door of their unbelief, in not coming to Christ to receive them, John v. 40, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Christ's promises in his testament are to mankind-sinners, as the promise of Canaan was to the Israelites in Egypt, indefinitely, those not excepted whose carcases fell in the wilderness, Exod. vi. 6, "Say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord."—ver. 8, "And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear." Thus was there a promise left them of entering into the rest of Canaan: and those who believed it, got the possession accordingly; those who believed not, did lose it. And they fell short of it, not because it was not left to them; but because, though it was left to them, as well as to those that entered,

yet they believed it not. So says the apostle, "They could not enter in because of unbelief," Heb. iii. 19. And this was no imputation on the faithfulness of God: for even in promises, as well as in covenants, there is a necessity of a mutual consent unto the same thing; the party to whom the promise is made, his acceptance thereof being necessary to complete the obligation on the promiser to make it effectual: because none making a promise of a benefit to another, can in reason be thought either to bind himself thereby to obtrude his benefit on the other against his will; or yet to give up with it, as a thing to be abandoned by him at any rate. Now, to this very purpose the apostle makes use of that case of the Israelites having the promise of Canaan left them, and yet coming short of it through unbelief, Heb. iv. 1, "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Ver. 2, "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." Compare Exod. vi. 9, "And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not."

Thirdly, It is to be inquired, who is the executor of the testament? In testaments among men, the testator and the executor are always different persons: and it must needs be so, because the testator dying cannot live again to see his will executed; therefore one or more, who live when he is gone, must be nominated for that purpose. But here that reason ceaseth. Jesus Christ could well be the executor of his own testament, and needed not to appoint any other to see to that matter. He was the Lord of life and death; and it was not possible he should be holden of death, Acts ii. 24. Though he was really to die, to confirm his testament; yet he was quickly to rise again, for the effectual execution thereof: accordingly the apostle observes, that he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification," Rom. iv. 25. And he lives for evermore. Even when he was in the grave, he was capable of executing his testament, being God as well as man, having a life which could not be lost, no not for a moment; namely, the divine life. And the executing of it then, when the human nature was in the state of death, was much the same as his executing of it before he had actually assumed the human nature at all.

And that Jesus Christ really is the executor of his own testament, appears from his being constituted by the Father Administrator of the covenant, to dispense the benefits thereof as great Steward of the house of heaven; and from the acts of his administration, both in this life, and in that which is to come: for he it is that hath

in his hand the conferring of grace, both real and relative, on sinners; and the conferring of glory on saints: the which are the executing of his testament, as well as the administering of the covenant: the former being subordinated to the latter. Meanwhile it cannot be refused, that he executes it by his Spirit, and employs gospel-ministers in the matter. Wherefore, whosoever would have any saving benefit by Christ's testament, or would partake of the legacies therein bequeathed, must come to himself to receive them; since he is the Executor of his own testament. And therefore the constant call of the gospel to perishing sinners, is to come to Christ for life and salvation; and the complaint on those who forsake their own mercy, is, that they will not come to him, John v. 40. And the whole life of believers must be a coming to him, 1 Pet. ii. 4, that is, a living by faith in him, Gal. ii. 20, whereby they may be daily receiving of the legacies, according to their exigencies.

Fourthly, In the last place, it is to be inquired, What are the legacies left in Christ's testament, to poor sinners of mankind, his only legatees? In the general, there is left to them therein what is sufficient to make them happy for time and eternity; even all the benefits of the covenant to be received by faith. These are Christ himself, and all things in and with him, Rom. viii. 32. And the general clause of the testament is, "According to your faith be it unto you," Matt. ix. 29. It being beyond our reach fully to reckon up the particulars, it shall suffice to point at a few things, as the comprehensive legacies, left by Jesus Christ in his testament, to sinners of mankind indefinitely.

Legacy 1. His own complete righteousness, to cover us before the Lord; hence called the gift of righteousness, Rom. v. 17, as being made over to us in his testament, to be received by faith; in which sense it is said to be revealed unto faith, that is, to be believed or trusted on, and so received and put on, chap. i. 17. Dying persons are wont to leave suits of mourning to their poor friends: but our dying Saviour left to all his legatees, the garments of salvation, the robe of righteousness, Isa. lxi. 10; beautiful garments, chap. lii. 1; white raiment, Rev. iii. 18, as a suit of rejoicing: for that, though he was dead, he is alive, and lives for evermore. Our father Adam left us naked, to our shame: yet need we not go naked, nor our shame be seen. For, by the second Adam's testament, sufficient clothing is left to our father's broken family; even the robe of his own righteousness: and nothing remains, but that we receive it as his legacy to us, and put it on. A holy God cannot admit us into his presence in our spiritual nakedness: the law requires us to appear before him in unspotted holiness of

nature, and perfect righteousness of life, as the condition of life; and withal, with a satisfaction to justice, by suffering, because we have sinned. But how can we make such an appearance before him? We can by no means put ourselves in such a condition, by any thing we can do or suffer. Yet is our case not hopeless. We have a good friend, the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left us by testament the holiness of his nature, wherewith he was born; the righteousness of his life, even all the good works he wrought in obedience to the ten commandments, during his life on earth; and the satisfaction made by his death, and sufferings from the womb to the grave: he hath made all these one undivided gift of righteousness, and bequeathed the same to us in his testament, to be received by faith. By means hereof, the most wretched sinner of us all may be beautified in the sight of a holy God, have wherewith to answer all the demands of the law for life, and obtain a full pardon and acceptance with God as righteous in his sight. How shall we escape, if, never claiming this legacy, we trample on the Testator's kindness?

Legacy 2. His new-covenant interest in God, whereby to render us happy: Heb. viii. 10, "I will be to them a God." Our father Adam left his whole family without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12. This was an unspeakable loss, a ruining loss: all misery in time and eternity was wrapt up in it. It was a loss that could never have been compensed: and to us it was irrecoverable. But Jesus Christ hath recovered for us the lost covenant-interest in God, and bequeathed it to us in his testament. This is a legacy full beyond our comprehension. Who can conceive fully what is in that, "I will be your God?" Surely all blessedness is in it, for time and eternity: Psalm cxliv. 15, "Happy is the people whose God is the Lord." Herein is left you peace, and reconciliation with God, John xiv. 27; adoption into the family of God, 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17, 18; yea, that ye shall have God for your own God, your own heritage, in a joint-heirship with Christ, Rom. viii. 17: all the persons of the Godhead to be yours; the Father to be your Father, the Son your Saviour, the Holy Ghost your Sanctifier: and all the attributes of God to be employed for your happiness. Nothing on Christ's part, nothing on God's part, stands between you and all this: nothing can make you come short of it but unbelief. That new-covenant interest in God is purchased by the blood of the everlasting covenant; it is given over unto Jesus as Administrator of the covenant; and he again hath made it over to you by testament. And what remains, but that ye come to the Executor, and receive your legacy, by faith? Alas! that any should be found who have no heart to it.

Legacy 3. His Spirit of grace, we so much need. Hear the words of the testament, Prov. i. 23, "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you." Christ hath the seven spirits of God, even a fulness of the Spirit in himself, to communicate; and hath made over the same, by his testament, to sinners of Adam's race: withal, as Executor of the testament, he hath made intimation thereof, declaring himself ready to give the Spirit unto all that come to him accordingly: John vii. 37, "Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Ver. 38, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Ver. 39, "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him, should receive." O suitable legacy for Adam's children! Here is life for us, life for our dead souls: for his Spirit is the Spirit of life, loosing the bands of sin and death, Rom. viii. 2. How shall dead souls live? Our Lord himself answers that question at large, John vi.; shewing himself to be the life-giving bread, that giveth life unto the world, ver. 33; that it is by eating this bread souls shall live, ver. 57; that the quickening Spirit is in it, ver. 63; and that it is to be eaten by faith, ver. 35, 63, 64. Whither then should the soul go for life, but to Christ as executor of his own testament? ver. 68. For as we derived death from the first Adam, so we must derive life from the second Adam, else we cannot have it, ver. 53. Here is regenerating and sanctifying grace for us, whereby our natures may be changed, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, the image of God repaired in us, through grace received, answering to the grace in the man Christ, as the wax to the seal, John i. 16; for all this worketh the Spirit of Christ in those who believe, Eph. i. 13. Here is made over to us grace whereby we may be enabled to true evangelical repentance, Zech. xii. 10; Ezek. xxxvi. 31, to walk in newness of life, ver. 27, and to mortify the deeds of the body, Rom. viii. 13. Here is bequeathed unto us enlightening grace, whereby we may discern our duty: for the Spirit is the Spirit of light and direction, John xvi. 13; exciting and strengthening grace, which comes by the supply of the Spirit, Phil. i. 19; Eph. iii. 16; comforting grace, in all trials and afflictions, for he is the Comforter abiding for ever where once he comes, John xiv. 16; and establishing grace, whereby the sinner once in Christ, is for ever kept from falling away, either totally or finally, ver. 17, 1 John ii. 27. In a word, Christ having left us the Spirit of grace in his testament, all grace suitable to our needs lies open to us. Wherefore none that hear the gospel remain destitute of grace, but because they will not come to Christ for it.

Legacy 4. A suitable portion of the good things of this life, as

infinite wisdom sees needful: Psalm xxxvii. 3, "Thou shalt dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Christ in his testament has disponed to sinners a kingdom, even the kingdom of God, and added those things thereunto, Matt. vi. 33. His testament is suited to all our needs, even in temporal things; he hath seen to our provision and protection, according to the promises made thereanent in the covenant. These promises primarily made to himself in the eternal covenant, he hath by his testament, as it were, indorsed to us, to be made forthcoming to all who by faith embrace it, and claim them upon it. Wherefore believers may go to Christ for their daily bread, as well as for spiritual benefits; pleading the testament for the one, as for the other. And to receive the bread and the water in virtue of Christ's testament, will be more satisfying to a Christian in the exercise of faith, than all the fulness of worldly men can be; forasmuch as at that rate they have them as the purchase of the precious blood of the Testator, and his Father's blessing therewith.

Legacy 5. An unstinged death: John viii. 51, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." Men in their testaments make provision for the comfortable life of their legatees; but they can leave them nothing to make death safe and comfortable to them. But in Christ's testament there is special provision for his legatees in death, as well as in life: and in the faith thereof, the saints have welcomed the grim messenger, dying comfortably in the faith of the sealed testament, Heb. xi. 13. Our Lord Jesus being to encounter death armed with its sting, and that in its full strength given it by the broken law, was perfectly sure of the victory: so making his testament, he left it as a part of his last will, that sinners of Adam's race should be free from the sting of death, through faith in him. A precious legacy which he could well bequeath, because purchased by his own death; and which he can and will make effectual, since the fulness of power over death and the grave is in his hand, and he is executor of his own testament. How lamentable is it, that men knowing they must die, should slight the testament, and the kindness of their best friend, appearing here, where none else are capable to help!

Legacy 6. And last. Everlasting life on the other side of death: John vi. 58, "He that eateth of this bread, shall live for ever." Christ's testament looks not only to this, but the other world: in it is provision made not only for time, but for eternity: he hath disponed in it a kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, as an everlasting inheritance for the legatees, Luke xxii. 29. This comprehends the happiness of the soul in its separate state; the glorious resurrec-

tion of the body at the last day; and the complete happiness of soul and body together, from thenceforth, and for evermore. The importance thereof who can express? But whatever is in it, it is in the testament made over to sinners of mankind: and whosoever of them come to Christ for it, shall, upon the ground of his faithfulness, without all peradventure obtain it.

These are the comprehensive legacies of Christ's testament. To enter more particularly into the detail of them, there would be no end. Ye have the book of the testament, both old and new, among your hands: read it diligently; and that as Christ's testament, as indeed it is: and in every page ye will perceive of the unsearchable riches. Withal remember that it nearly concerns you, and every one of you, as parties legatees in whose favour it was made: since ye are men, sons of men, Prov. viii. 4. The testament is lawfully intimated to you, both by the preaching of the word, and by putting a copy of it, a Bible, in your hands. And ye are called to come to Christ, as executor of it, by faith in him, to receive your legacies. Happy will you be, if ye answer the call. But if ye do not, it will be "more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you:" for it will aggravate your condemnation, that not only were all these legacies left you in Christ's testament, but the same was intimated unto you, and ye were called to come to the executor to receive them, but ye believed not, ye would not.

Thus far of Christ the Testator of the covenant.

III. CHRIST THE PROPHET OF THE COVENANT.

The covenant being an eternal transaction, which no creature had access to be witness unto; the being thereof was an absolute secret to the whole creation: and, in that it was a mystery of the manifold wisdom of God, Eph. iii. 10, no creature was sufficient to unfold the nature thereof. Upon the which accounts, the apostle calls it the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world, 1 Cor. ii. 7. And thence appears a necessity of constituting a prophet of this covenant: and that none but a divine person was fit to be the original prophet thereof; and this so much the more, that, by reason of the spiritual blindness of the parties unto whom it was to be revealed, a mere objective revelation could not be sufficient in the case: for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," ver. 14. Wherefore Jesus Christ was, as administrator of the covenant, constituted the Prophet thereof; being he of whom, by

the apostle's testimony, "Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me, Acts iii. 22. And whosoever else were at any time prophets thereof, he alone was the original prophet of it, John i. 18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

And in this character Christ was constituted, (1.) The Messenger, (2.) The Witness, and (3.) The Interpreter of the covenant.

1. In the capacity of Prophet, he was constituted the Messenger of the covenant, Mal. iii. 1, to bring the good tidings of that treaty of peace into the world; and not only so, but, by the authority of heaven, to proclaim the treaty to sinners, to offer them the benefit thereof, and to deal with them to accept, by coming into it personally. A covenant surely of unparalleled weight and importance, that had such a messenger thereof.

2. In the same capacity he was constituted the witness of the covenant, Isa. iv. 4, "Behold, I have given him for a witness of the people." God knew the world to be a guilty world, whose consciences witnessed the demerit of death; and that therefore they would be very slow to believe the good news from heaven, touching the covenant of peace: and for this cause he would give them one competent to witness the truth thereof; and pitched upon Jesus Christ for that effect. He was a son of Adam; so the more fit to attest it unto men: he was the eternal Son of God; and therefore not liable to error or mistake in his testimony: he was an eye-witness to the eternal transaction; and so he could speak on the matter that which he had seen with his Father, John viii. 38. He came down from heaven where the covenant was made, unto earth, in favour of which it was made: wherefore he could witness in the earth what he had seen in heaven about it, chap. iii. 31, "He that cometh from heaven, is above all." Ver. 32, "And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth." In him we have a twofold witness, which is full evidence in law, He is the amen, the faithful and true witness, Rev. iii. 14. In him we have the witness of man; in respect whereof he is the faithful witness: and the witness of God; in respect whereof he is the true witness, even truth itself. Compare John viii. 18, "I am one that bears witness of myself;" where Christ being a divine witness, in respect of his Godhead, is said to bear witness of himself, as a man appearing in the world, revealing the covenant. And in respect of both these, he is the Amen, whose witness confirms and determines the truth of the law.

3. He is in the same capacity constituted the interpreter of the covenant, Job xxxiii. 23, to teach it unto men. We are not only

slow to believe the covenant, but it is hard for us to understand it. It lies so far beyond the reach of our natural understanding, that we cannot understand it in a saving manner, unless the Son of God hath given us an understanding, (a supernatural one), that we may know him that is true, 1 John v. 20. And whosoever shall so understand it, must be all taught of God, John vi. 45, that is, of Jesus Christ, ver 46. So he is by the Father constituted interpreter, and great teacher of the mystery of the covenant: and all the children of the covenant must be his disciples, and learn of him.

Now Christ's administration of the covenant, as the prophet thereof, may be taken up in these three things following.

1. His intimating and offering the covenant to sinners, by his word, for bringing them personally into it. This he did from the time of Adam's fall, is now doing, and will do even unto the end of time, that the mystery of God shall be finished. He began the Old Testament dispensation thereof, in person. Appearing in human shape, with his own mouth he gave the first notice of the covenant that ever there was in the world, and made the first offer of it in paradise, Gen. iii. 8, 15. He carried it on by prophets and ordinary teachers, whom he commissioned for that effect, and furnished with gifts for the work. The former of these he employed to write in his name, as well as to speak therein, in that matter: and by both he spoke to sinners, intimating and offering the covenant unto them, by their means; whether through the word written or spoken. And thus he managed that work, to the salvation of those who believed, in the patriarchal ages before and after the flood; and all along the time of the Jewish church, from Moses to the end of that dispensation. Then he also began the New Testament dispensation in his own person. Having by his incarnation become man, he applied himself to this work. Though he was born "king of the Jews," Matt. ii. 2, and many of them would have had him to have mounted their throne, John vi. 15; yet he choosed rather to appear in the character of a prophet, and betake himself unto the work of the ministry, for to preach the gospel, and intimate and offer the covenant to perishing sinners; and so he was a minister of the circumcision, Rom. xv. 8. Of him in this capacity particularly, Solomon, that king-preacher, was a type, Eccl. i. 1. And this also he did, and still doth carry on mediately and by proxy, especially after his ascension into heaven; and that partly by his apostles and other extraordinary officers, whom he employed to write, as well as to speak, in his name; and partly by ordinary ministers of the gospel, to be continued in the church to the end of the world, Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13. Thus he is now administering the covenant unto us, by

putting his written word of the Old and New Testament in our hands, and sending men in his name to preach the gospel unto us. By these means he speaks to sinners, intimating and offering them the covenant: and so he carries on the work, to the salvation of those that believe, and rendering unbelievers inexcusable, 2 Cor. v. 20; Rev. iii. 22; Luke x. 16. Wherefore the offer of the covenant made to us in the gospel, is his offer: and though the word is sent to us by men, they are but his voice in the matter, he is the speaker. Then "see that ye refuse not him that speaketh," Heb. xii. 25.

2. His making the intimation and offer of the covenant effectual to the elect, by the Spirit, 1 Pet. i. 12, "By them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." The great Prophet of the covenant can effectually teach the most unteachable sinners of mankind; causing light not only to break forth in a dark world, by his word, but in dark hearts, by his Spirit: for the fulness of the Spirit of light is in him, and he hath eye-salve for the spiritually blind, Rev. iii. 18. He knoweth who are his, in whose name he contracted with the Father, and received the promise of the Spirit: and, sooner or latter, he so enlightens them, that he rescues them from under the power of their spiritual darkness, and renders the administration of the covenant effectual to them, however ineffectual it be to others, Col. i. 13. And this he doth, by bringing his word to them with power, through the efficacy of his Spirit opening their eyes. In the first place, by his Spirit acting upon them, as a Spirit of bondage, he sets home on their consciences, the holy law in the commands and curse thereof, as of divine authority, and binding on them in particular. Hereby they are convinced of their sin and misery, seeing their sin as henious in the sight of God, and his wrath due to them for their sin: they are filled with remorse, terror, and anxiety; are made to pant for relief, feel an absolute need of Christ and his righteousness, and despair of relief by any other way, Acts ii. 37, and xvi. 29, 30. And then, by the same Spirit acting within them as a Spirit of life, and communicated unto them from himself, in the word of the gospel, he sets home on their hearts and consciences, the glorious gospel in its free promise of life and salvation to sinners through Jesus Christ, as it stands in the holy scriptures; clearing and demonstrating the same unto them, to be the infallible word of the eternal God, and his word to them in particular: 1 Thess. ii. 13, "Ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God." Chap. i. 5, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." This demonstration of the Spirit is that which immediately cleareth to them the ground of their

believing in particular; as saith the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5, "My preaching was—in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." And it is an internal attestation of the word of the gospel unto them, distinct from the clearest external or ministerial attestation of it; according to the saying of our Saviour, John xv. 26, "The Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testtfy of me." Ver. 27, "And ye also shall bear witness." By the power hereof, getting, by way of spiritual sight, John vi. 40, a knowledge of Christ in his transcendent glory and excellency, exhibited to them in the free promise of the gospel, they are infallibly brought to believe. The Spirit thus applying the word of the gospel to them, they greedily embrace it, and apply it to themselves by faith; as may be seen in these converts, Acts ii. 38, "Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." Ver. 39, "For the promise is unto you." Ver. 41, "Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized."

3. *Lastly*, His teaching and instructing them by his word and Spirit, from thenceforth, as children, of the covenant, his own disciples. The whole plan of salvation is laid down in the covenant, being a mystery of the manifold wisdom of God, whereof there is still more and more to be learned: and Christ is the great Prophet to teach it. And "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his covenant," Psalm xxv. 14. The saints, by reason of the remains of darkness in their minds while here, are apt to lose sight of the parties in the covenant: but the great prophet is to shew them the Father, and to manifest himself unto them, by the Spirit. The condition of the covenant, the Mediator's own righteousness, the sole ground of all their hopes, cannot be kept in view, but by means of the light of life from himself. And in his light only can they have a believing view of the promises and privileges of the covenant. The duties of the covenant, whereof the exceeding broad law of the ten commands is the rule, are many; and though they be clear in themselves, yet are they often so dark and perplexed to us, that we cannot distinguish between sin and duty: but the children of the covenant have an infallible teacher, whom they may consult in all cases, and of whom they may learn how to steer their course in every point; and "the meek will he guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way," Psalm xxv. 9.

The darkness brought on mankind by sin, nothing but the grace of the new covenant can effectually dispel. The true light is

a benefit of that covenant, purchased by the blood of Christ, and lodged with him among the rest of the benefits of his great trust: and he hath the dispensing of it, as the great Prophet of the covenant. To him then must we have our recourse for light in all cases, whether we be under the midnight darkness of a natural state, or under the twilight-darkness of the present imperfection of a state of grace: yea, in the mid-day light of glory, the Lamb is the light of the heavenly city, Rev. xxi. 23.

And thus Christ is the Prophet of the covenant.

IV. CHRIST THE KING OF THE COVENANT.

The covenant of grace is a matter of so vast importance, both to the honour of God, and the good of souls; and of such a diffusive and general concern to mankind, that the administration thereof required one invested with kingly power and authority for that effect. And the disposition of the parties, objects of the administration, together with the nature of the thing itself, which concerns the inner man chiefly, and the disposal of the choicest of Heaven's favours, at once laid aside the greatest of men, and the highest of angels, as no more fit to bear that office, than to produce another world out of nothing. Wherefore the Father's choice in that matter natively fell on his own Son, the Second Adam: and he was made King of the covenant.

God as Creator of the world, is King of the same, by an original, underived right: and so he hath the supreme power over it, of which he can no more divest himself, than of his being. This is the essential kingdom, common to the three persons in the glorious Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

But the kingdom of the covenant, whereof we speak, is a derived, delegated one, which the Mediator Christ holds of his Father, by the tenor of the covenant, for the administration thereof; as is declared, Psalm. ii. 6, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Now, the great design of that administration, is to gather together sinners of mankind into one body, under the bond of the covenant; and to make them happy, in the enjoyment of the privileges thereof, in grace and glory, the which body, the church, is the kingdom of the covenant, a kingdom that was to be won, and raised out of the rebel-world of mankind, lying in wickedness; and whereof Christ was, by his Father, constituted the alone King and Head.

In subserviency to this kingdom, the kingdom of providence throughout the world was also committed to him, being made the head over all things to the church, which is his body, Eph. i. 22, 23,

he was appointed to rule, not only over his willing subjects, but in the midst of his enemies, Psalm cx. 2. The management of the wheel of providence, throughout the whole world, was put into the hand of Zion's King. Into the same hand that the Father hath committed the government of the church, he hath also committed the government of the world: for there is no exception. "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son," John v. 22, "all power in heaven and in earth," Matth. xxviii. 18. So he is "Lord of lords, and King of kings," Rev. xvii. 14, and "by him kings reign—princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth," Prov. viii. 15, 16. This headship over the world was necessary to his administration of the covenant, as head of the church; necessary for compassing the ends thereof. Being vested therewith, he sets up and pulls down, in the world, as he sees meet for the great purposes of the covenant: and of what use this is, in the administration thereof, may be learned from Isa. xliii. 14, "For your sake" (namely, for the sake of the church) "I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans." Ver. 15, "I am—your King." Thus the King and Head of the church manageth all things by his providence, as well without as within the church; though in a very different manner, because in a very different relation, as to his own people, and to strangers. The which was typified in David, who for the benefit of his own kingdom, the kingdom of Israel, was made "the head of the Heathen," Psalm xviii. 43. For David smote the Philistines, and subdued them, 2 Sam. viii. 1, and the "Moabites." ver. 2, "and the Syrians," ver 6, "and all they of Edom became David's servants," ver. 14, "And David reigned over all Israel, and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people," ver. 15.

Now, the chief acts of Christ's administration of the covenant, as he is King thereof, are these.

1. His appointing ordinances of his kingdom, both for bringing sinners personally into the covenant, and for confirming and strengthening the covenanted; as also officers of his kingdom, to administer these ordinances in his name and authority. Both the one and the other were different, under the Old Testament, and under the New; which hath made two different forms of external administration of the covenant; the old, which is passed away, and the new, that will continue to the end of the world: but both were from the same authority, and for compassing the same great designs of the covenant, agreeable to the different times for which they were appointed; and are all of them to be found in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament, the book of the manner of the kingdom. It was the same Lord Jesus, the angel of the covenant which spake to

Moses in the mount Sinai, Acts vii. 38, who instituted the new testament church and ordinances, and "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry," Eph. iv. 11. 12. The Saviour, King, and Lawgiver of the church, are one, Is. xxxiii. 22, "The Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us."

Emitting his royal proclamations into the world, by the hand of his messengers, in the gospel; bearing, that whosoever will come unto him, and unite with him as the head of the covenant, by faith, shall be readily received into it, and have a right to all the privileges thereof, in him: Mark xvi. 15, "Go ye unto all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Ver. 16, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.". Therein the covenant is published, and offered in his name to every sinner of mankind unto whose ears this voice reacheth: and they are called, commanded, and charged to come into it, and submit to his royal sceptre. His call and offer is their warrant to come: his command obligeth them, that they cannot refuse, but in rebellion and disobedience against his royal authority. The promises are set before them indefinitely, that whosoever will, may, by believing, apply them to themselves. The king's proclamation meddles not with the secrets of the eternal election, to reveal them. But the promises of the covenant, infallibly to be accomplised in some, are, in Christ's testament, as indorsed to sinners of mankind indefinitely, to be fulfilled unto all and every one who shall by faith embrace them: and the proclamation makes lawful intimation of the testament, This intimation is the appointed means of begetting faith, and of bringing sinners into the covenant thereby; for faith cometh by hearing, Rom. x. 17. And it is made effectual to some, by the Spirit, through the grace of the covenant secured by promise for them.

And hence it is, that the covenant being thus administered to all promiscuously, there is an use of conditional phrases in the administration thereof: though in the covenant itself there are no conditions, properly so called, but what were fulfilled by Jesus Christ in his own person. The word of the covenant coming with alike warrant to the elect and the non-elect; to them who certainly will believe, and to them who will continue in their unbelief; the administering of it equally to both in the gospel-proclamation, must needs be by proposing the promises indefinitely as to persons; the which must at length be resolved into conditional phrases. So it is proclaimed in the ears of all, "I will betrothe thee unto me," and "I will be to them a God." And one believes and applies the

same; and he is thereupon united to Christ, and instated in the covenant to all saving purposes: another who hath as good a revealed warrant to believe as the former, yet believes not; and so comes short of the promise. Now, to speak alike to those who will thus differently entertain the words of the covenant, it follows of course, to resolve them into such expressions as these, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved:" and "He that believeth shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned." Meanwhile the covenant itself is a different thing from the form of the external administration of it.

3. Effectually subduing the elect to himself, through the power of his Spirit so managing the word, that it operates on them like a sword, piercing their souls, conquering their natural aversion and obstinacy, and making them willing to yield, and embrace the covenant. Rev. i. 16, "Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." What that sword is, and by what a strong arm it is wielded in this case, may be learned from the apostle calling it "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," Eph. vi. 17; and what the effect of it is, being managed by that "arm of the Lord revealed," is declared by the Psalmist, Psalm cx. 3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power;" and by the prophet, Isa. xliv. 3, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed;"—Ver. 4, "And they shall spring up."—Ver. 5, "One shall say, I am the Lord's." Christ communicates to them, and every one of them, at the time appointed in the eternal counsel, the Spirit and grace of the covenant, therein secured for them by promise: and thereby they are quickened, enabled, and determined to believe. And whereas he finds them prisoners of hope, he opens the house of their bondage, breaking the yoke of sin, death, and the devil, from off their necks, by his Spirit applying to them his satisfaction. The which has that mighty effect, inasmuch as then the law hath full satisfaction as to them; and the law being satisfied, the strength of sin is broken, and the strength of sin being broken, the sting of death is taken away; and the sting of death being taken away, the devil loseth his power over them; and Satan's power over them being lost, the present evil world, which is his kingdom, can hold them no longer. Thus are they separated from the world lying in wickedness, and constituted members of the kingdom of Christ; delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son, Col. i. 13. And from thenceforth, though they be in the world, yet they are no more of it; but strangers and pilgrims in it, true and lively members of the invisible kingdom of Christ; a society to which the world is an im-

placable enemy, John xv. 19, "Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." And herein Christ doth, in a special manner, shew himself a King mighty in battle, by the power of his grace overcoming the most perverse and rebellious to a cordial submission, and rescuing them from the bondage and dominion of their enemies.

4. Gathering them and others with them together into a visible church-state, Gen. xlix. 10, "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Thus is erected the visible church or kingdom of Christ in the world; a society separate from the visible kingdom of the devil, and professing faith in, and obedience to Christ, outwardly bearing his badge, and the signs of his covenant. Among them is the ordinary seat of the administration of the covenant, the ordinary means of salvation, and offers of grace. In their land the voice of the turtle is heard, and the singing of birds, in the preaching of the glorious gospel; while there is a lasting winter over all the world besides. They have the Bible, and sabbaths, the ministry of the word, and the holy sacraments. Among them is to be found the communion of saints, and a church-government, instituted for controlling the unruly, suppressing sin and wickedness, and encouraging an orderly walk. And they have the privilege of heaven's protection; insomuch that the church shall be defended, and her enemies so restrained and conquered by her King, that she shall continue while the world stands, maugre all opposition that hell can make against her: Matt. xxviii. 20, "Lo I am with you alway even unto the end of the world."

5. *Lastly*, Ruling and governing his true and kindly subjects agreeably unto the covenant, by which his royal prerogative is stated, and their privileges are secured, Isa. ix. 6, "The government shall be upon his shoulder." Of this his government there are several acts, the chief of which are these following.

1*st*, He gives them the laws of the covenant; not only intimating the same unto them externally by his word; but teaching them internally by his Spirit, writing them upon the tables of their hearts, and leaving an indelible copy of them affixed there: Heb. viii. 10, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." These laws of the covenant are no other but the laws of the ten commandments, originally given to Adam in his creation, and at his transportation into paradise and settlement there, vested with the form of the covenant of works; and now unto believers in Christ, standing without that form, in the covenant of grace as the eternal rule of righteousness, whereunto they are to be conformed by the grace of the covenant; the effectuating of which is committed by the

Father to Jesus Christ as administrator thereof. And accordingly he carries it on, by his word and Spirit, in a suitableness to their nature as rational agents, and to their state; making these laws known to them, as the rule of life, unto which they stand bound by the authority, and matchless love of God their Creator and Redeemer; and withal inclining their hearts unto the obedience of the same.

2dly, He gives them the rewards of the covenant in the course of their obedience: Psalm xix. 11, "In keeping of them there is great reward." He puts his people indeed to work and labour; but not to labour in the fire, and for vanity, as the servants of sin do: they are to work and labour, like the ox treading out the corn, which was not to be muzzled, but to have access at once to work and to eat. The service now done to Zion's King, hath a reward in this life, as well as a reward in the life to come. By the order of the covenant, there is privilege established to follow duty, as the reward thereof; the which order is observed by the King in his administration. Accordingly, he proposeth the privilege of comfort, to excite to the duty of mourning, Matt. v. 4, "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted:" the special tokens of heaven's favour, to excite unto a holy tender walk, John xiv. 21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them,—shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." In like manner to excite the same holy obedience, he proposeth the full reward in the life to come, 1 Cor. ix. 24, "So run that ye may obtain." Rev. iii. 21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne." And so certainly doth he accomplish the promise of the reward of both kinds, that his people may be assured "their labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 51: for faithfulness is the girdle of his loins; and, in dispensing the privileges to his people upon the back of their duty, he doth but observe the stated order of the covenant. Not that the order of the covenant is in every particular first—duty, then privilege: nay, it is first, privilege; next, duty; then privilege again; and so forward, till privilege and duty come both to perfection in heaven, not to be distinguished more. Wo to us if it were otherwise! truly, if it were otherwise, we could neither be brought into the covenant, nor kept within it in life: for how shall one at first believe, till once he is privileged with the quickening Spirit? and how shall a fallen saint renew his faith and repentance, till once he is privileged with new influences of grace? John xv. 5, "Without me ye can do nothing." But here lies the matter, the leading privilege bringing in duty, there follows further privilege on the back of duty, according to the order of the covenant: and these further privileges are the

rewards we speak of. And the scripture calls them rewards, even in respect of the saints: because they are given to a working saint, on the back of his work. Howbeit they are as far from the nature of a reward, strictly and properly so called, the which on the account of one's work is of debt to him, as the leading privileges are, that produce the working: but both the one and the other are equally the reward of Christ's work, in the most strict and proper notion of reward.

3*dly*, He ministers unto them the discipline of the covenant, in case of their disobedience. The discipline of the covenant is fatherly chastisement, which their state of imperfection in this life makes necessary to their welfare: and therefore it is secured for them in the covenant, Psalm lxxxix. 30, "If his children forsake my law:" ver. 32, "Then will I visit their transgression with the rod." Ver. 33, "Nevertheless"—ver. 34, "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." It belongs to the promissory part of the covenant, and particularly to the promise of sanctification: forasmuch as it is not vindictive, but medicinal; being an appointed means of advancing holiness in them. He chastens for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness, Heb. xii. 10. And thus it serves to purge iniquity, and to take away sin, Isa. xxvii. 9; namely, in that as a fire melting down the paint and varnish of the defiling objects in the world, in our sight, and as a looking-glass shewing us our pollution, it occasions and excites us unto washing in the only laver of the blood of Christ, by faith. Now, the administering of the discipline of the covenant is committed unto Zion's King, John v. 22, "The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Rev. iii. 19, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." And, as to the nature of it, it comprehends all manner of strokes upon their worldly substance, name, employments, and relations; all manner of bodily afflictions, diseases, and pains, incident to sinful flesh; even natural death itself, 1 Cor. xi. 30, 32; and generally, all outward strokes which any of the children of men are liable to, Eccl. ix. 2, "All things come alike to all." Moreover, it comprehends spiritual strokes, such as desertion, God's hiding his face from them, withdrawing the light of his countenance, their losing some measure of their graces and comforts, woundings of spirit, horrors of conscience, whereby they may be brought to the very brink of despair: so that, howbeit the casting them into hell is not within the compass of the discipline of the covenant, yet the casting a kind of hell into them, making them to roar by reason of disquietness of heart, Psalm xxxviii. 1, is within the compass of it. And, what is worse than any of all these, it

comprehends their being harassed with horrid temptations, and set up as marks for Satan's fiery darts, Eph, vi. 16, the hardening of their hearts, Isa. lxiii. 17, and their being suffered to fall into one sin, and that a gross sin too, for the punishment of another, as in the case of David and Peter. All these things are within the compass of the discipline of the covenant; and believers are particularly and directly threatened with them, in case of their disobedience, to move them to beware of it: yea, and they are often inflicted by Zion's King on his beloved subjects, that, by these marks of his displeasure against their sin, he may correct them, make sin bitter to them, and stir them up to repentance and watchfulness. And the worst of them all, even the very hardening of their hearts, and the punishing of one sin with another, are, by the sovereign grace of the covenant, made effectual for these holy ends: the which grace opening the heart in renewed repentance, godly sorrow for sin breaks forth the more forcibly, as waters do which have been long dammed up. Thus these bitter waters, running in the channel of the covenant, become healing waters: these sharp swords are, by the covenant, beaten into ploughshares; and these piercing spears into pruning-hooks. Of this discipline of the covenant, all the subjects of Christ in this world do partake: and they must be under it, till they arrive at perfection in the other world, Heb. xii. 6—8.

4thly, He gives them the pardons of the covenant; the pardoning of crimes committed against the laws of God, being one of the royal prerogatives of Zion's King, whom "God hath exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins," Acts v. 31. He gives them the first pardon, removing the guilt of revenging wrath, in their justification; and he gives them also the subsequent pardons, removing the guilt of fatherly anger, upon their renewing the actings of faith and repentance, as was observed before. The Father having committed all judgment unto the Son, he hath the dispensing of Heaven's favours, according to the method and order of the covenant; and they are not only conferred for his sake, but by his hand.

5thly, He affords them the defence of the covenant, while in this life they are amongst their enemies, Psalm lxxxix. 18, "For the Lord is our defence; and the holy One of Israel is our king." Satan is their enemy, a malicious, subtile, and powerful enemy: but Christ is their friend, and takes them under his protection. He loves them dearly, as the purchase of his own blood, the members of his own mystical body, and bearing his Father's image: he is infinitely wise, and can outshoot the devil in his own bow: and he is

the stronger man, who can bind the strong man. The world joins issue with Satan in opposing them; but shall not prevail to ruin them, neither by force nor fraud: for greater is he, than the god of this world and all his dominion, 1 John iv. 4, "Ye are of God, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Their worst enemies are within them, namely, the remains of corruption, which, in the depth of sovereign wisdom, are not expelled during this life; but left for their exercise and trial, and for the discovery of the power of the grace of their King. And he manifests his power, in keeping alive in them the spunk of holy fire, in the midst of an ocean of corruption; and causing it to make head against the same, until it quite dry it up: Rom. vii. 24, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Ver. 25, "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." He has all their enemies in chains, that they can act no further against them than he sees meet to permit: and at his pleasure he restrains them, bounding them by his power, as to the kind, degree, and continuance of their attacks, Psalm lxxvi. 10, "The remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

Lastly, He authoritatively completes the happiness of the covenant in them. He purchased it for them as a Priest: he reveals it to them as a Prophet: but as a King, he doth, in the way of authority, put them in full possession thereof, Matth. xxv. 34, "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And by the same authority he will pass sentence against his and their enemies, having fully conquered them, ver. 41. And so he will complete for ever the peace of his covenant-subjects.

Thus far of Christ's administration of the covenant, as he is King thereof.

V. CHRIST THE INTERCESSOR OF THE COVENANT.

As for performing the condition of the covenant, Jesus Christ became the priest, namely, the sacrificing priest of it, as hath been said in the due place: so, for the administration of the covenant, he became the intercessor, namely, the interceding priest of it. Christ's intercession did not take its place in the making of the covenant. The love and grace of God made the motion for a new covenant freely: and the breach betwixt God and sinners was of another nature, than to be made up by a simple intercession; the which might have moved mercy, but could not have satisfied justice, that, requiring a sacrifice for sin, could not be satisfied by pleading,

but by paying a ransom: Heb. ix. 22, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Neither doth Christ's sacrificing take its place in the administration of the covenant: there is no need of any new sacrificing there; "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," chap. x. 14. But his sacrificing natively took its place in the making of the covenant, and fulfilling the condition thereof; and his intercession, in the administration of the covenant, and fulfilling the promises of it. Accordingly, for the administration of the covenant, he is the intercessor thereof: Rom. viii. 34, "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

And indeed there was need of an intercessor for that effect: since an infinitely holy God, and sinful creatures, could neither come together into a state of peace, nor continue in it, with the safety of God's honour, without an intercessor. Wherefore Jesus Christ being appointed thereto, is, in that character, "entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us," Heb. ix. 24, to manage the business of the covenant for our behoof; willing the merit of his sacrifice to be applied to all those in whose room and stead he died, and that for all the intents and purposes of the covenant in their favours, according to the method laid down and stated therein. And this his intercession is always effectual, as he himself testifieth, saying unto his Father, John xi. 42, "I knew that thou hearest me always. Whence it appears, that the object of it is not of equal latitude with the object of the administration of the covenant, and of his acting in the other relations belonging to that administration; but that it is restricted unto those whom he, as second Adam, represented in the eternal transaction. And this is very agreeable to the nature of the divine contrivance for the salvation of sinners; in which the eternal purpose hath made a difference of persons, according to sovereign will and pleasure: this being, as it were, one clause in the constitution of the administration, peculiarly in favour of the objects of electing love. So the intercessor himself teacheth us, John xvii. 9, "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me:" ver. 20, "For them which shall believe on me." Ver. 24, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am."

Now, Christ administers the covenant as intercessor thereof, these following ways chiefly.

1. Effectually procuring, by his interest in heaven, the actual inbringing of his elect, at the time appointed, into a covenant-state of union, communion, peace, and favour with God: John xvii. 20,

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word:" ver. 21, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us." They are by nature in a state of enmity with God, even as others: but through Christ's intercession the peace is made between Heaven and them. He purchased it for them by the blood of his sacrifice; it was promised to him in the covenant on that score; and by his intercession he actually obtains it unto them. His intercession is the spring that puts all the wheels in motion, that are set a-going, in the time of loves, for bringing one out of the state of nature, into a state of grace. Providence manageth favourably towards the conversion of the man; the word powerfully affects him, while on others it falls like rain on a rock, running off as fast as it comes on; the business of eternal salvation is closely laid to heart with him; the law doth its office upon him, and so doth the gospel also in its turn: and these things cease not, until he is brought into a new state, and is become a new creature. Whence did all this take its rise! Why, the man had an unknown friend in the court of heaven, who spoke for him to the King: and all this is the fruit of that intercession made for him.

2. Appearing for them, and in their name taking possession of heaven, and all the other benefits of the covenant, which they have a right to, in virtue of their new covenant state: Eph. ii. 6, "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Heb. vi. 20, "Whither the forerunner is for us entered." That moment wherein a sinner enters into the covenant by believing, he hath a right to all; for if children, then heirs, Rom. viii. 17. Howbeit, in the case of most of the children of God, the possession seems to be delayed long after that time. But it is to be considered, that possession may not only be taken by a man in his own person; but also in the person of another: thus one may by his attorney take possession of an estate which he never saw; and a minor, by his representative, may be possessed of what it is not as yet meet to give him into his own hand. So, howbeit, the believer's possession of all in his own person is indeed delayed: yet in this respect it is not delayed one moment after his believing in Jesus Christ: for his intercessor acts for him in the matter. What should hinder this manner of possession one moment after believing? For the covenant of promises is an undoubted right; the sinner, though on earth, doth by faith plead it before God in heaven; and Christ is there, as his representative and intercessor, to take possession in his name. Wherefore every believer shall justly reckon himself, though having nothing, yet possessing all things, 2 Cor. vi. 10, and complete in him, Col. ii. 10.

3. Maintaining the peace between God and them while they are here in this world. Having purchased their peace with heaven, by the sacrifice of himself, and by his intercession brought them into a state of peace, he doth not leave it to themselves to maintain it. If it were so, it would soon be at an end. There are so many failures on their part, while they are compassed with the body of sin, that their own consciences have whereof to accuse them every day; and the devil is an incessant accuser of the brethren: but Christ intercedes for them, to the preventing always a total rupture betwixt heaven and them; however they may for their sins fall under God's fatherly displeasure: upon the ground of his satisfaction for them, he answereth all accusations against them, and takes up all emerging differences between them and their covenanted God: 1 John ii. 1, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:" ver. 2, "And he is the propitiation for our sins." Hereupon the apostle triumphs over all their accusers, Rom. viii. 33, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth:" ver. 34, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, who also maketh intercession for us." Wherefore their state of peace with God is inviolably maintained; though, for their correction, they may indeed lose the sight and sense of it for a time. Having once become their friend in Christ, he may indeed severely chastise them for their faults, but he never becomes their enemy again, even in the way of legal enmity, far less in the way of real enmity, Rom. viii. 1; Isa. liv. 9.

4. Procuring them access to God, and acceptance with him, notwithstanding of their imperfections, while in this life. Saints on earth never want business in the court of heaven. Yet being sinful, they are in themselves unfit to come into the presence of the King. But the Intercessor of the covenant introduceth them, procuring them access by his interest in the court; "For through him we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father," Eph. ii. 18. And by this means they are allowed access with boldness, chap. iii. 12. He makes their persons accepted, notwithstanding of the sinfulness cleaving to them: they are accepted in the beloved, chap. i. 6. And in him they have an altar that sanctifies their gifts, Heb. xiii. 10. So that their spiritual sacrifices, howbeit they want not their blemishes, yet are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5. Their prayers made in faith, though smelling rank of the remains of the corruption of nature, yet being perfumed by the Intercessor with the incense of his merit, are accepted in heaven, and have gracious returns made them, Rev. viii. 4. Their doing service, and their suffering services, which howsoever costly, could not be ac-

cepted for their own worth, because imperfect, are through his intercession accepted, as being washed, and made white in the blood of the Lamb, chap. vii. 14.

5. *Lastly*, Obtaining their admittance into heaven, in the due time; and continuing their state of perfect happiness there for ever and ever: John xvii. 24, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." Our Lord Jesus Christ was by his Father constituted a priest for ever, Psalm cx. 4. Nevertheless, after his having once offered himself a sacrifice on the cross, he offereth no more sacrifice. Therefore he must be, not a sacrificing Priest for ever, but an interceding Priest, as the apostle explains it, Heb. vii. 25, "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Now, the spirits of just men being made perfect immediately after death, there is no more imperfections about their souls morally considered, Heb. xii. 23; and after the resurrection, there will be no more imperfection about their bodies neither, 1 Cor. xv. 53. The effect then of Christ's intercession for ever, must be the everlasting continuation of their happy state; their Intercessor externally willing the continuance of the same, on the ground of the eternal redemption obtained for them, by the sacrifice of himself. The infinite merit of his sacrifice will be eternally presented before God in the holy place, while he shall appear there in our nature continually: and this will be the everlasting security for the continuation of the saints' happiness. The which happiness issuing from the merit of his sacrifice as their Priest, will be communicated unto him as their Prophet and their King: for these his offices will never be laid aside. As he is a Priest for ever, so of his kingdom there shall be no end, Luke i. 33, and the Lamb will be the light of the heavenly city, Rev. xxi. 23; the saint's communion with God there, being still in and through the Mediator, in a manner agreeable to their state of perfection, chap. vii. 17.

And these are the chief acts of his administration of the covenant, as Intercessor thereof.

Thus far of the fourth head, namely, the administration of the covenant.

HEAD V.

THE TRIAL OF A SAVING PERSONAL INBEING IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

We have now opened the doctrine of the covenant of grace, in treating of the parties in it, the making of it, the parts of it, and the

administration thereof: it remains to make some practical improvement of the whole, in this and the following head.

If one seriously considers the covenant of grace, as that on which the salvation of our soul depends, he can hardly miss to put the question to himself, What interest have I in that covenant? There is no question but you have a common interest in it, by which you are sufficiently warranted to come into it: but that you may have, and yet perish; for even "children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness," Matt. viii. 12. But the question is, Whether ye have a saving interest in it, being actually come into it, or not? The covenant is indeed brought unto you, in the ordinances of the gospel: but are you brought into the covenant, united with the head thereof, Christ Jesus? It hath been administered to you: but have you by faith taken hold of it? You have received the sacrament of baptism, the seal of the covenant, in the right of your parents; but have you personally embraced the covenant in sincerity? The two covenants, of works, and of grace, divide the whole world between them: every man is under one of the two; and no man can be under both at one and the same time, in respect of his state before the Lord, Rom. vi. 14. Under the first covenant stands a numerous party, in the first Adam, head of that broken covenant, deriving sin, death, and the curse from him: under the second covenant stands a party, in the second Adam, head of that fulfilled covenant, deriving life and salvation from him. These parties will be judged, each according to the covenant they are under: so the former will be condemned, in virtue of the curse of the covenant in which they are; and the latter will be eternally saved, in virtue of the promise of life, in the covenant wherein they are. In the meanwhile there is access for those of the first covenant to leave their party and covenant, and to join the party in the second covenant: but death will block up that access. Wherefore it is the interest of the one as well as of the other, to know which party and covenant they belong to. And for trial hereof, I offer the following marks, signs, or characters of those who are savingly and personally within the covenant of grace.

I. They are such as have fled for refuge from the covenant of works; that have come into the covenant of the second Adam, as refuges from the covenant of the first Adam. For that is the character of the heirs of promise, Heb. vi. 17, 18. Though time was when they lived at ease within the dominion of the covenant of the law; yet God hath set fire to their nest there, that they have found themselves unable to dwell any longer within the boundaries of that covenant. Mount Sinai hath been altogether on a smoke round

about them; and the trumpet of the curse of the law hath waxed louder and louder, till it made them to hear it on the side of their righteousness and best works, where they were deafest; and it hath caused them exceedingly to fear and quake, as a curse denounced against them in particular: Rom. vii. 9, "When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." It hath chased them from all the starting holes about that mountain, and left no place within the bounds of that covenant safe to them: not only has it chased them out of their profane courses, but also out of all confidence in their good works and duties of whatsoever kind; to flee for their life into the covenant of free grace, as the slayer into the city of refuge; what things were gain to them, counting these loss for Christ, Phil. iii. 7.

II. They are such as cordially approve of, and acquiesce in the plan of the covenant, as suited to the honour of God, and to their case in particular: looking upon it as well ordered in all things, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Whosoever duly considers the corruption brought into man's nature by the fall, will plainly perceive, that the method of salvation laid down in the covenant of grace, is the very reverse of the inclination of corrupt human nature: so that nothing less than the powerful efficacy of divine grace can bring a soul unto a cordial approbation of it, and acquiescence in it: wherefore our Lord pronounceth them blessed, whosoever shall not be offended in him, Matth. xi. 6. Natural men may indeed shape the covenant, in their own apprehensions, into such a form, as they may have a very good liking of it. They may apprehend it as a covenant designed to make men easy and happy; while in the meantime it allows them, at least in some instances, to be unholy: as a covenant wherein through Christ's means, they may obtain acceptance with God by their good works, notwithstanding of their ill works. But in all this they are in love with a creature of their own fancy, not with God's covenant of grace. Let the covenant be set before them in the light of the holy scripture, and viewed by them in that light; they will be sure to dislike it, and pick holes in it. Let the design of the covenant be fairly discovered, as being to exalt God's free grace on the ruins of all excellency left with man; to make Christ all, and man nothing in his own salvation; the proud heart cannot away with that, cannot submit to the righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3. The efficacy of it, in working out sin, separating between the soul and its dearest lusts, once fairly appearing; natural men flee from it, as if one cried unto them, There is death in the pot. Let them seriously enter into the thought, how it is suited to the honour of God, and the divine perfections; and how it is suited to their real

safety before him: and they can not see how it is so. To the Jewish wisdom it is a stumbling-block, a device inconsistent with the divine perfections: the Grecian learning pronounceth it foolishness, a method of salvation unsafe to be trusted to: only the eye of faith discovers it to be the power of God, and the wisdom of God; safe for guilty creatures, and honourable for a holy God, 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

III. Upon the discovery of the covenant to them, as made from eternity between God and the second Adam, and offered to them in the gospel; they will satisfy themselves in their covenanting, with heaven's draught of it, so far as they understand it; and they will not go about to add unto it, nor to diminish from it; but will stand to the terms of God and Christ's making, Acts ix. 6, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" They will put a blank in the Lord's hand, for their part; as content if all within the compass of the covenant, without putting in their exceptions, or desiring amendments and alterations to be made in their favour. They are content of the laws of the covenant; as well as of the privileges of it; of the discipline of the covenant, as well as of the rewards of it; of the condition of the covenant as fulfilled by Christ alone, as well as of the promises of it to be fulfilled to them; and of the promise of santification, as well as of the promise of justification and glorification. Hence the covenant, as revealed in the gospel, is by the Holy Ghost called a hearing, Isa. liii. 1, marg. that is, a thing to be heard and received by faith, as a voice is received and heard by the ear, according to that, chap. lv. 5, "Hear, and your soul shall live." It is the natural disposition of mankind, to speak rather than to hear: for we are more ready to declare our own will by speaking, than to receive the will of another by hearing. Wherefore the gospel being the declaration of the will of God for our salvation, only to be heard and received by faith, and therefore called the hearing of faith, Gal. iii. 2, there is need of the power of grace, to subdue the heart to the hearing thereof, and to stop the mouth from making proposals of our own in that matter.

IV. The love of God in Christ is habitually predominant in them: Prov. viii. 17, "I love them that love me." Great was the love to them appearing in the covenant. The parties-contractors about them acted therein from a principle of free, and yet greatest love. From thence sprung the first motion for a covenant of life and salvation unto them: thence it was the Father was content to give his Son for them; the Son was well pleased to become man, and suffer death for them; the holy Spirit to take them for his habitation, to quicken, sanctify, and perfect them. The love of God produced the proposal of the great and precious promises in their favour, upon

terms consistent with his justice: Christ as second Adam, out of love to them, accepted of these terms. And when the eternal transaction was, in the gospel, by the demonstration of the Spirit, opened and brought home to their souls; this love shone forth to them, so as they believed it. And that believed love of God in Christ kindled in their souls a superlative love to him again: 1 John iv. 19, "We love him; because he first loved us." And therefore, although that their love is not always alike vigorous, but hath its waxings and wanings according to the increase and decrease of their faith; yet, since their faith never altogether fails, Luke xxii. 32, it never fails altogether neither, from the moment that it is kindled in their hearts. And it is an active principle in them, constraining them to obedience, 2 Cor. v. 14, giving the chief room in their heart and affection to God in Christ, that their soul saith, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee," Psalm lxxiii. 25. It makes it to be their greatest care to please him, and to be accepted of him, 2 Cor. v. 9; and their greatest fear, to stir him up or offend him, Can. iii. 35. It makes duty agreeable to them, as a matter of choice: 1 John v. 3, "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." And it renders the remains of sin, the body of this death, a heavy burden which they long to be delievered from, Rom. vii. 24.

V. Jesus Christ the head of the covenant, is their head with their own consent. With heart and good-will they have taken him for their head, for all the purposes of the covenant; and they stand to it, not to alter, if the choice were to make a thousand times. Those to whom the Father from eternity choose Christ for a head, do, in the day of their conversion, by faith approve the choice, making it over again personally for themselves; whence they are said to appoint themselves one head, Hos. i. 11. And as often as they reiterate their acts of faith, which they must live by, they do upon the matter reiterate their choice. Being sensible of what they suffered by the miscarriage of Adam their first head, Christ is precious to them as a second Adam. They come into the covenant, and abide also in it, under his wings allenarly; expecting no benefit of it, nor by it, but through him. And they have taken him as their head for government, as well as their head for nourishment and support. They have delivered up themselves unto him, to be ruled by him, as well as to be saved by him; to be governed by his laws, and not by their own lusts, as well as to be saved by his grace, and not by their own works.

VI. The condition of the covenant fulfilled by Jesus Christ, is the

alone ground of their confidence before the Lord, as to acceptance with him, or any benefit of the covenant they look to partake of. A crucified Saviour is the foundation laid in Zion, for sinners to build on: and believing on him is the soul's building upon it, 1 Pet. ii. 6. If men build on another foundation, they build on the sand, and their confidence shall be rooted out: if, being driven off from all other foundation, they build not on this neither, they must needs perish as the chaff which the wind driveth away. To believe, or build on Christ's righteousness by him fulfilled, can import no less than one's trusting on it for his salvation. Whether this trust be strong or weak, it must be: else faith is not, building on Christ is not; but the soul is kept in a state of wavering, in opposition to the staying of it by faith on Christ, Jam. i. 6. Now, he that is within the covenant, takes Christ's righteousness as his alone ground of confidence before the Lord: for the covenant shews not, nor allows any other: nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified, 1 Cor. ii. 2. He hath some measure of confidence for life and salvation, upon that ground; whereby he is distinguished from the desperate, faithless, and unbelieving: and what confidence he hath for life and salvation, he hath upon that ground alone; whereby he is distinguished from the presumptuous, formalists, and hypocrites. And both these things are joined in the believer's character, Philip. iii. 3, "And rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no "confidence in the flesh."

VII. The promises of the covenant are a satisfying portion to their hearts. They are indeed sensible they have many wants; but then they see as much in the covenant as would supply them all; that they need not go to another door for supply: they are persuaded there is as much water in that well as would quench all their thirst, if they could but get the art of drawing it. Thus the covenant is all their salvation, and all their desire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. This discovery of the covenant is not owing to nature, but to that grace which shews so much worth in the one pearl, as makes a man content to sell all he hath, to gain it, Matth. xiii. 46. But no man will come into the covenant, until once he get it: for who will join himself to one in a marriage-covenant, or contract of service, with whom he cannot see how to live? Faith discerns in the covenant not only a refuge, but a portion, Psalm cxlii. 5, else the man would never come into it. And none who have once got this discovery, will remain out of the covenant, Psalm ix. 10, "They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee." See John iv. 10. If the worth of the treasure hid in the field of the gospel, be perceived, all will go for the obtaining thereof, Matth. xiii. 44, 45; all will be counted loss and dung for the excellency of it, Philip. iii. 8. Cer-

tainly the men of the world do not see this in the covenant: it is but an empty hungry thing in their blinded eyes. The covenant is, in the gospel, held out to them in the breadth and length thereof: but it does not take with them: it is far from being all their desire: after all, as if they had seen nothing that could satisfy, they still cry, "Who will shew us any good?" Psalm iv. 6. The truth is, the heart of man can never see enough in the covenant for to rest satisfied with, till grace give it a new set, and contract its endless desires: for that which the unrenewed heart is most set upon, there is no provision in the covenant for, but against it.

VIII. The Spirit of the covenant is in them: and that is another spirit than what the men of the world are actuated by, Numb. xiv. 24; Ezek. xxxvi. 27, "I will put my Spirit within you." The Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of the covenant, purchased by the blood of the covenant, lodged in the fulness thereof in Christ the head of the covenant, and communicated in some measure to all the covenant-people. And that Spirit may be known by these three characters thereof.

1. The Spirit of the covenant is a Spirit of holiness. The great design of the covenant, next to the glory of God, was the sanctification of sinners, Luke i. 74, 75. All the lines of the covenant, from the first of them unto the last, meet in that as their centre. There is a display of exact justice, in the condition of the covenant; of rich grace and mercy, in the promises of it: of greatest faithfulness and power, in the administration of it: but holiness goes through the whole, and every the least part of it. Wherefore it is called the holy covenant, Dan. xi. 30. Who then can reasonably imagine, that the unholy are within this covenant? that the servants of sin, whether profane, or formalists, strangers to the power of godliness, whom no bands of holiness will hold, can be within the bond of the holy covenant? No, sure they are not; they have not the Spirit of the covenant. The Spirit of the covenant makes the covenanted initially holy; and to press toward the mark, to wrestle, long, groan, and pant for the perfection of holiness, Philip. iii. 14. It makes a vein of holiness run through their whole man; their whole life; their thoughts, their words, their actions; their dealings with God, and their dealings with men. The covenant was erected on purpose to destroy the works of the devil: it was a confederacy entered into by the Father and the Son, for rooting sin out of the hearts and lives of the children of Adam; for restoring the divine image in them; and for bringing them again to a perfect conformity to the moral law of the ten commandments, from which they fell in Adam. For this end was the condition of it performed, the promises of it made,

and the administration thereof committed to the holy Jesus: 1 John iii. 8, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." Wherefore, whosoever partake of the Spirit of the covenant, partake of the Spirit of holiness: Gal. v. 18, "If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law." Ver. 16, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."

2. The Spirit of the covenant is an ingenuous free Spirit, Psalm li. 12. It is the spirit of sons, not of slaves; of free men, not of bond-men, Rom. viii. 15. There is some obedience to the holy law given by unbelievers, the men of the first covenant, as well as by believers, the men of the second covenant: and the eyes of the world can perceive no difference between the obedience of some of the former sort, and of those of the latter sort; howbeit there is a vast difference, which is seen by the all-seeing eye. Are these within the covenant, praying persons? So are many, who have no saving part nor lot in it, Isa. lviii. 2. Are they men of temperance and sobriety, justice and honesty, candour and faithfulness, men of blameless lives? So are several others besides them, for all that any man can see, Phil. iii. 6. Thus far they agree. But there is a vast difference of the spirit they are actuated by, which makes a mighty odds in the manner and kind of their obedience. Unbelievers are actuated by a spirit of bondage, suitable to their state of bondage under the covenant of works, Gal. iv. 24, 25. A slavish fear and a servile hope are the weights hung upon them by that covenant, causing them to go: sin is avoided, duty performed, not out of love to God and holiness, but out of love to themselves. Believers are actuated by the Spirit of adoption, suitable to their state of adoption, under the covenant of grace, ver. 26. God is their Father: and they serve him as sons, not as slaves, Mal. iii. 17. Christ is their elder brother, who loved them, and gave himself for them: and his love constrains them, 2 Cor. v. 14. The Holy Spirit dwells in them, hath quickened them, renewed them, making them partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. So sin is avoided as contrary to their new nature, duty pursued as agreeable to it. Their faith of the love of God in Christ hath begotten in them love to God again, for a new principle of obedience, 1 Tim. i. 5. By faith they trust on Christ, and on him alone for life and salvation: and this at once undermines in them the slavish fear of hell, and the servile hope of heaven; so that these are so far from being their only motives to obedience, that they cannot be their predominant motives; nay they cannot be at all in them, but as enemies to their faith and love, 2 Tim. i. 7; 1 John iv. 18. Yet withal, it is to be remembered,

that it is not slavish for saints to fear God's fatherly anger, and thereby to be stirred up to duty, Psalm cxix. 120; Heb. xi. 7; nor to hold the way of duty, in hope of the enjoyment of God in that way, and the tokens of his favour, John xiv. 21, and in the end perfect happiness in heaven; all through Jesus Christ alone, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Our need of these things for incitements to duty, do indeed argue our childish state, for there will be no need of these fears and hopes in heaven; but by no means a slavish state. Neither is it at all slavish, to have the heart filled with a reverential fear and dread of God, upon the consideration of his tremendous justice, and wrath in hell, against the miserable objects thereof; and to be stirred up to duty thereby, Matt. x. 28; Heb. xii. 28, 29. To look thereunto, and move away towards God in the way of duty, with fear and trembling, is very agreeable to the state of those who have by faith received a kingdom that cannot be moved; but are not yet ascended unto heaven: who are indeed drawn up out of the fearful depth; but are not as yet haled up to the top of the rock, though the strong chain of the covenant is so about them, that they shall never fall down again. For in heaven the awe and reverence of God, on that score, will be perfect, Isa. vi. 1, 2, 3. But it is slavish for saints, to fear their being cast into hell for sin; and servile, to hope their obtaining heaven for their good works. And yet that slavish fear and servile hope, may creep in upon the children of the second covenant, and move them to duty: because their faith is weak, much of the old Adam remains in them, and it is not easy for them, though dead to the law in point of privilege, to be dead to it in point of practice. But these impure mixtures of selfishness in their duties will be humbling unto them: and they will loath themselves, for that they act not, in their obedience, with more of the free spirit and son-like disposition. And their will in that case is accepted through Christ.

3. The Spirit of the covenant is a Spirit of sympathy regulated by the covenant. There is a commonness of interest, and thence a mutual sympathy, among confederates. And this sympathy among the confederates of Heaven, regards both the head and the people of the covenant.

(1.) They have a native and kindly sympathy with the God and head of the covenant. It is true, his essential glory can never be liable to diminution; nor can his eternal rest in himself be in the least disturbed, by whatsoever men or angels may do or suffer: and the man Christ is now beyond the reach of suffering. Nevertheless, his declarative glory in the world hath its times of shining clear, and of being under a cloud. Now, as he hath a sympathy with

them, in all their concerns, their distresses and their enlargements, their joys and their griefs, Isa. lxiii. 9; Luke xv. 5; which is a very tender sympathy, insomuch that the touching of them is the touching of the apple of his eye, Zech. ii. 8: so they also have a very tender sympathy with him, in the concerns of his glory. They are glad and rejoice in the prosperity of his kingdom, Acts xi. 23, 24. They pray for it continually, Psalm lxxii. 15: and contribute their endeavours, in their stations to advance it, Phil. i. 21, "For to me to live is Christ." They have a feeling of the indignities done to his Majesty, as done to themselves, Psalm lxix. 9, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me." And they are mourners for the sins of others, as well as for their own; on the account of the dishonour they do to God, because they keep not his law, Psalm cxix. 136. The children of the covenant will neither be opposers of the kingdom of Christ, nor will they be neuters; but will put their shoulders to the work of their Lord, to help it forward, according to their vocation: and without such a public spirit, in greater or lesser measure, no man shall be able to prove his saving interest in the covenant: for so hath our Lord himself determined the matter, Matt. xii. 30, "He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."

(2.) They have a native and kindly sympathy with the people of the covenant: for they are members one of another, Eph. iv. 25. The grace of the covenant disposeth men to be loving and beneficial to mankind, but in a peculiar manner to holy men; to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," Gal. vi. 10. The common bond of the covenant engageth them in peculiar love one to another; even as in that bond they are the common object of the world's hatred. They bear the same image with Christ their common head; and that image will recommend all who bear it, unto one that is within the covenant himself, so far as he can discern it. Wherefore their love is a love to all the saints, Eph. i. 15. And hence ariseth the sympathy which every true Christian hath with the church of Christ throughout the world, and with the several members thereof known to them; their joint interest in the covenant challengeth it; for by the covenant there is a near relation among them; and from their union under the same head, results their communion, 1 Cor. xii. 12, 26. Therefore a spirit of selfishness, whereby men's concern is all swallowed up in their own things, leaving them no sympathy with the church and people of God, is a shrewd sign of a graceless state. How much more, a spirit of reigning enmity against religion, and the professors thereof: where reli-

gion, and what concerns it, make men the special objects of their enmity, spite, and resentment? An habitual course of this is none of the spots of God's people; but it declares men to be of the world, John xv. 19, "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." The Spirit of the covenant will carry men quite another way; since, taking hold of the covenant, they have embarked in the same bottom with those whose head Christ is, and who have declared war against the devil's kingdom. To them they will say, "We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you," Zech. viii. 23.

IX. In the last place, The laws of the covenant are in their hearts, namely, the laws of the ten commandments, the eternal rule of righteousness, Heb. viii. 10. That law, in all its parts, is a copy of the divine nature, which in regeneration is transcribed into the heart of every one brought into the covenant: and the whole of it is written there, though every part is not written alike clear, nor any part perfect. As is the image of God restored in us, so is the law written in our hearts: in sanctification there is a new man created; which speaks a perfection of parts, though there is not a perfection of degrees in these parts, Eph. iv. 24; 2 Cor. v. 17; 1 Cor. xiii. 12. This may be taken up in these four things:—

1. They approve of the whole law, so far as it is known to them: Psalm cxix. 128, "I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right." They love God: and every part of the law is a line of his image: wherefore loving the law as expressing the image of his holiness, they must needs love the whole law; since there is nothing in it but what is a transcript of that holiness. And as the head of the covenant is in their eyes altogether lovely, Cant. v. 16, the laws of the covenant being like him, must be so too. Why do not unbelievers love the holy law, but because they do not love a holy God? Rom. viii. 7. But believers loving a holy God in Christ, must love the law also, since in it the image of his holiness is expressed. The holy law condemns many things in them; yea, every thing of theirs, so far as it is morally imperfect: and so they do themselves, consenting unto the law that it is good, chap. vii. 16. It condemns every sin; every one's most beloved sin, the evil he is most easily led aside into; and for that very cause the unrenewed heart hates the law. But the grace of the covenant makes a man to leave his complaint on himself; to approve the law and condemn his own lust contrary thereto: Rom. vii. 12, "The law is holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Ver. 14, "But I am carnal."

2. They have an inclination of heart towards the whole law, so

far as they know it: Psalm cxix. 5, "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" There is in them a fixed principle, which lies the same way with the holy law; bending away from what the law forbids, and towards what the law directs unto. True, there is a contrary principle in them too, which fights against it; but so do they against that contrary principle, breathing, longing and lusting for the complete victory over it, and for full conformity to the holy law, Gal. v. 17. This is a new set of heart given in the new birth; exerting itself, not in lazy wishes for conformity to the law, but in a resolute struggle for it, enduring to the end. Hence,

3. They will habitually endeavour to conform in their practice to the whole law, so far as they know: Psalm cxix. 6, "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." If the law is written in one's heart, he will write it out again in his conversation: and a sanctified heart will certainly make a holy life; Matt. vi. 22, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Where is the efficacy of the holy covenant, if men may be within the covenant, and yet live like those that are without it? Nay, but to whomsoever the grace of God hath effectually appeared, it will have taught them effectually to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Tit. ii. 11, 12. If the grace of the covenant bring you not to duties of piety towards God, you have no saving part in it. If you are brought unto these, but withal left at liberty from the duties of righteousness toward your neighbour, that you do not loath, but dare to be unjust in smaller or greater matters; you are yet "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity:" Luke xvi. 11, "If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?" If you are brought forward unto both these, and yet not sober, but left slaves to your sensual appetites and fleshly affections, you are no better: for "they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts," Gal. v. 24. But whoso have fled to the covenant of grace in Christ for life and salvation, and withal are honestly endeavouring conformity to the whole law in their practice, they, howbeit in many things they miss their mark, do shew themselves to be within the bond of the holy covenant, and ought to take the comfort thereof, as the divine allowance to them: 2 Cor. i. 12, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."

4. *Lastly*, Their souls lie open to what of the laws of the covenant they know not. They are content to know them, desirous to be taught them, that they may conform unto them: Psalm cxix. 26, "Teach me thy statutes." There are many sins of ours hid unto us; because there is much of the laws of the covenant we do not discern. And hypocrites do not desire to know the whole law: they are willingly ignorant of some things thereof, because they have no inclination to entertain them. But the sincere, being content to part with every false way, and to take upon them the whole yoke of Christ, hating sin as contrary to God's nature and will, and loving duty as agreeable thereto, do of course lie open to the further discoveries of sin and duty: they come to the light, John iii. 21. They say, "That which I see not, teach thou me," Job xxxiv. 32, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting," Psalm cxxxix. 23, 24.

And this much shall suffice to have spoken on the fifth head, namely, The trial of a saving personal inbeing in the covenant of grace.

HEAD VI.

THE WAY OF INSTATING SINNERS PERSONALLY AND SAVINGLY IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

By the marks and characters given, it appears, that they are but few who are personally and savingly instated in the covenant of grace, in comparison of those who are strangers to it: but we are allowed to offer it to strangers; to invite and call them who are without the covenant, to come into it, and so to compel them to come in, Luke xiv. 23. Here then are the glad tidings of the gospel: there is a covenant, which was entered into from eternity between God and Christ the second Adam; a covenant of grace, made in favour of sinners of Adam's race, ruined by the breach of the covenant of works. In it there is full provision for your salvation; to relieve you from all the ruining effects of the broken first covenant, and to render you completely happy. The condition of this covenant is indeed high; being screwed up to a pitch by the demands of the law and justice: yet there is nothing on that part to discourage you from the covenant; for your inability being foreseen from eternity, it was laid upon one that is mighty, to perform it; and now it is already performed and fulfilled to your hand by

that mighty one, Christ Jesus. Only, the promises remain to be fulfilled. So the burden of the condition is over without you; and ye are called to the benefit of the promises. And that ye may have the more clear access thereto, the administration of the covenant is put into the hand of the same Christ Jesus; and he is intrusted with all the promises, to fulfil them to sinners. He hath begun to fulfil them to all who have taken hold of the covenant; and is ready to fulfil them to all who yet shall take hold thereof. For that end he hath made his testament of these promises, and constituted sinners of mankind his legatees; that whosoever of them will, may come, claim, and take the water of life freely, Rev. xxii. 17. The whole of the covenant is in him. In him is God, the party-contractor on heaven's side, 2 Cor. v. 19. He himself is the party-contractor on man's side: and in him are all believers really, and all the elect legally and representatively. In him is the condition of the covenant, and that as fulfilled: he is the Lord our righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6. In him are all the promises yea, and amen, 2 Cor. i. 20, all meeting in him, as lines of a circle in their centre; and sure and stedfast, nowise liable to misgive, as did the promise of the covenant of works in the first Adam. And he as a king hath emitted his royal proclamations, bearing, that whosoever will come into him, and unite with him as head of the covenant, shall be taken into it, and have a right to all the privileges thereof in him, and through him.

Thus the covenant is brought to you, and set before you in the gospel; so that ye must needs be either receivers or refusers of it. Refuse it not: that is dangerous beyond expression. Take hold of it; for it is your life. Sinners, ye are under the covenant of works, where there is no life, no salvation for you: but the door of the new covenant is opened unto you: come, enter into it without delay. Flee, and make your escape out of the dominion of the law, the covenant of works, ye were born under, and are living under: and that can in no wise be done, but by your accepting and embracing this covenant offered to you in the gospel; to the instating of you personally in it, to all the purposes of life and salvation.

Sinners instated in the covenant by faith or believing.

To clear your way into the covenant, it is necessary to shew, by what means it is that a sinner embraceth and is instated in it, effectually unto salvation. And this, in one word, is by faith, or believing on Jesus Christ: Acts xvi. 31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The covenant of grace is held forth unto you: God saith to every one of you, "I will make an

everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David:" and to close the bargain with you, and state you personally in it, to all intents and purposes of salvation, all that is required of you is to hear, that is, to believe; "Hear, and your soul shall live," Isa. lv. 3. He that believeth, is within the covenant of grace personally and savingly: he that believeth not, is still under the covenant of works, where the first Adam left him. Faith is the hand whereby one taketh hold of the covenant, signs it for himself, and closeth the bargain for his own salvation. It is the mouth whereby sinners consent to the covenant, that God becomes their God, and they his people. Although while ye are without the covenant, the working of perfect obedience under the pain of the curse is required of you; and more than that, suffering also, even to the satisfaction of justice; and both these, in virtue of the broken first covenant: and when ye are once brought within the covenant, obedience to all the ten commandments, and suffering of the discipline of the covenant in case of your failures, are required of you, in virtue of the new covenant ye are entered into: yet to enter you into the covenant, and instate you in it unto salvation, nothing is required of you, but that ye believe on Christ. Only believe, Mark v. 36, is the constant doctrine of the gospel in this point. Do what you will, and believe not, you remain in a state of damnation: whatever is done, or not done by you, believe, and you are in a state of salvation. If you should say it with your lips a thousand times over, that you accept of the covenant; if you should come under the most solemn and awful bond and engagement to be the Lord's, expressly taking the same upon you in prayer, or otherwise; if you should write your covenant, and subscribe it with your hand; and should take the sacrament of Christ's body and blood upon it, to confirm all: yet if you do not with the heart believe on Jesus Christ, you embrace not the covenant, you miss the saving hold of it, and remain without the saving bond of it. And if you should this moment with the heart believe on Christ, having no access to speak, pray, write, or communicate: yet the moment you believe, you are personally and savingly instated in the covenant, never to fall out of it through the ages of eternity; God is your God, and all the promises of the covenant are yours: though you had missed the gripe of the covenant ten thousand times before: in that case you have it firm and sure: Mark xvi. 16, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: he that believeth not, shall be damned."

And that believing on Christ should be the appointed means of entering sinners into the covenant of grace, is very agreeable to the nature and end of that great transaction. The which appears by these two considerations following.

1. Hereby the grace of the covenant is preserved entire in the dispensation of the covenant; and by that means the promise is made sure to all the seed, Rom. iv. 16. Faith is contradistinguished to works, as grace is to debt, chap. iv. 4, 5. If any work or doing of ours were that upon which we were instated in the covenant, and got the right in the promises; then the covenant and benefit thereof would be of debt to us, contrary to the declared end and design of that method of salvation, which is to exalt the free grace of God, and to cut off all boasting from us, Eph. ii. 8, 9. But the nature of faith's efficacy in the business is adapted to that end and design of the covenant; in as much as it is a grace, not giving, but purely receiving; taking all freely from Christ, without money, and without price, laying the stress of the soul's acceptance with God wholly on what Christ hath done and suffered; and entirely renouncing all doings and sufferings of our own in that point. And thus the promise is sure to us: for whereas the plea of any work of ours would be a very uncertain one; faith's plea is ever sure and stedfast, as grounded allenarly on what Christ hath wrought.

2. Hereby the sinner's entering into the covenant is by uniting with Christ the representative, with whom it was made as party-contractor; which is the Scipture-account of the matter, John x. 9, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall he saved:" and so the unity of the covenant, and the representation in it, are preserved. If men entered into the covenant some other way, as by their accepting properly called terms to them proposed, and promising for themselves the performance of them: in that case the representation in the covenant is marred; and there would be in effect as many covenants of grace as there are persons embracing it at different times; at least, Christ's covenant would be one, and ours another distinct therefrom; the contrary of which is before evinced from the Scripture. But the covenant of grace being made with Christ as second Adam, in the name of all such as should be his; it plainly follows, that the only way of one's entering personally into it, must be by becoming his, standing related to the head of the covenant as our head: and it is by faith, and no work, nor consent of ours differing from faith, that we are united to him, and become members of his body, Eph. iii. 17. How do we all enter personally into the covenant of works, so as to partake of the curse in it? Is it not through our becoming, by natural generation, branches of the first Adam, the representative in that covenant? Hereby every one of us is personally entered, and instated in that covenant, before we are capable to approve or disapprove of the same, to consent to it, or dissent from it. Even so we enter personally into the

covenant of grace, so as to partake of the benefits in it, by our becoming branches of the second Adam the representative therein: and that is through faith, in subjects capable of actual believing. It is by being ingrafted into Christ we come to partake of the covenant and benefits thereof. And hence it is, that infants, not capable of actual believing, nor of knowing what the covenant is, yet having the Spirit of faith, are personally entered into it, and instated in it; forasmuch as that Spirit of faith is effectual in them, to a real uniting them with Christ. Hereunto agrees God's giving Christ for a covenant; that in him people may have the covenant, and all the benefits thereof. As God, in making the covenant, took Christ for all, for the condition, and for the parties to receive the promises; he being the second Adam: so sinners, in accepting and embracing of the covenant, are to take him for all; the whole of the covenant, the parties and parts of it too being in him, forasmuch as he is God as well as man, second Adam.

And thus it appears, that uniting with Christ the head of the covenant, is a sinner's formal entering into the covenant: the which uniting with him being by faith on him, it is evident that it is by believing on Christ a sinner embraceth, enters into, and is instated in the covenant unto salvation. Wherefore reach Christ by faith, and ye reach the covenant: if ye miss him, ye miss the covenant, in point of life and salvation. But here ariseth a weighty question, to wit,

QUEST. What is that believing, by which one unites with Jesus Christ, and so enters into the covenant of grace? ANSW. The clearing of this point being so necessary to direct sinners in their way into the covenant, for their eternal salvation; we shall, for what now remains, address ourselves to the consideration thereof only.

And to begin with the word, by which the Holy Ghost expresseth what we call believing, whether in the Old or New Testament; whosoever shall duly consider the import of it, in the scripture-use thereof, will find, that it is just trusting, trusting a word, person, or thing. And hence the scripture-phrases of believing to, and believing in, that is, trusting to, and trusting in; the former, phrases, however unusual with us in conversation, yet ordinary, both in the Old and New Testament, according to the originals. It is the trusting a word, as to a report, Isa. liii. 1. In his words, Psalm cvi. 12. It is the trusting a person; so, in the style of the Holy Ghost, the Israelites believed in the Lord, and in Moses his servant, Exod. xiv. 31. He believed not in his servants, Job iv. 18, that is, as we read it, he put no trust in them. And it is the trusting a thing too: so, in the same style, Job xxxix. 12, "Wilt thou believe in him," to

wit, the unicorn, "that he will bring home thy seed?" *i. e.* Wilt thou trust in him, that he will do it? Deut. xxviii. 66, "Thou shalt not believe in thy life;" that is, as we read it, Thou shalt have none assurance of thy life; no trust in it, because no certainty about it. The phraseology is the same in the New Testament, as being brought into it from the Old, only in a different language. And taking the meaning of the Holy Ghost in this matter, from the words which he teacheth, as we are directed, 1 Cor. ii. 13, we conclude, That faith or believing, so expressed by him in the Scripture, is, in the general, trusting, the trusting of a word, and of a person, and thing, held forth in that word.

Now, there is a twofold word to be believed or trusted of all those who would enter into the covenant of grace in a saving manner; namely, the word of the law, and the word of the gospel. The believing of the former is a faith of the law; the believing of the latter, a faith of the gospel: of which in order.

A faith of the Law preparatory for the covenant.

The faith of the law is not indeed saving faith: for the law is the word and ministration of condemnation, and not of righteousness; as speaking nothing of a Saviour, an atonement, or an imputed righteousness, 2 Cor. iii. 9. Nevertheless, it is a necessary antecedent thereof, according to the stated order of the dispensation of the covenant. The faith of the law is like the hearing of the strong wind, the feeling of the earthquake, and seeing of the fire; in which though the Lord was not, yet they served to prepare for hearkening to "the still small voice," in which he was, 1 Kings xix. 11, 12. Accordingly, the faith of the law is the work of the Spirit of God, as well as the saving faith of the gospel; though wrought in a different manner. The former he works as a Spirit of bondage, convincing of sin and misery, by the law, Rom. viii. 15, with John xvi. 8. The latter he works as a quickening Spirit, enlightening the soul in the knowledge of Christ, by the gospel, 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18.

Whosoever then would enter into the covenant of grace, must in the first place have a faith of the law: for which cause, it is necessary, that the law, as well as the gospel be preached unto sinners. And that faith of the law consists in a belief of these three things.

1. By it a man believes that he is a sinner. The holy law pronounceth him guilty: and he believes the report of the law concerning himself in particular; his heavy and sorrowful heart, by this faith, echoing to the voice of the law, guilty, guilty! Rom. iii. 19. The which faith rests not on the testimony of man, whether spoken or written; but is a divine faith, founded upon the testimony

of God, in his holy law, demonstrated by the Spirit of bondage, to be the voice of the eternal God, and the voice of that God to him in particular. And thus he believes, (1.) That his life and conversation is sinful, displeasing and hateful in the sight of a holy God, according to the divine testimony, Rom. iii. 12, "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doth good, no not one." He is convinced, that he is gone out of the way of God, and walking in the way of destruction; that the number of his errors of omission and commission he cannot understand; and that all his righteousness, as well as his unrighteousness, are as filthy rags before the Lord. (2.) That his heart is full of mischief and iniquity, according to the divine testimony, Jer. xvii. 9, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." The law shining into the heart, discovers divers lusts there, which he little noticed before; and pressing the unholy heart, irritates them: and thus such a mystery of iniquity within his breast opens to his view, as he could never before believe to have been there. Rom. vii. 3, "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." (3.) That his nature is quite corrupted, as one dead in trespasses and sins, according to the divine testimony, Eph. ii. 1. To the verdict of the law, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Job xiv. 4, his soul, by this faith, echoes back, unclean, unclean! "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." He is convinced his disease is hereditary and natural: and that therefore his nature must be renewed: that otherwise, he not only does no good, but can do no good. In all these respects, he believes himself to be an object loathsome in the sight of God; loathsome in his nature, heart, and life.

2. By it a man believes, that he is a lost and undone sinner, under the curse of the law; liable to vengeance, according to the divine testimony, Gal. iii. 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." He can no more look upon the curse as some strange thing, belonging only to some monsters of wickedness, and not to him: for the Spirit of the Lord, as a Spirit of bondage, applies it closely to him; as if he said, thou art the man. And like one under sentence of death pronounced against him, he groans out his belief of it, under the pressure thereof, Luke xv. 17, I perish.

3 *Lastly*, By it a man believes his utter inability to recover himself. He believes, that he cannot, by any doings or sufferings of his, remove the curse of the law from off him; according to the divine testimony of our being without strength in that point, Rom.

v. 6; nor change his own nature, heart, and life, so as to render them acceptable to God; according to the infallible testimony, Jer. xiii. 23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." He is, in his own eyes, as in the sight of God, a spiritually dead man; legally dead, and morally dead, as the apostle testifies of himself in that case, Rom. vii. 9.

This is the faith of the law. And the effect of it is a legal repentance, whereby a sinner is broken and bruised with fear and terror of the wrath of God; grieves and sorroweth for sin, as a ruining and destructive evil; and therefore really desires to be freed from it; despairs of salvation by himself; and seriously looks out for relief another way, Acts ii. 17, and xvi. 29, 30. Thus the law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ; and the faith of the law, makes way for the faith of the gospel. Not that either this legal faith, or legal repentance, is the condition of our welcome to Christ and the covenant of grace: our access to Christ and the covenant is proclaimed free, without any conditions or qualifications required in us, to warrant us sinners of mankind to believe on Jesus Christ, as was shown before. But they are necessary to move and excite us, to make use of our privilege of free access to Christ and the covenant, insomuch that none will come to Christ, nor embrace the covenant, without them in greater or lesser measure. Even as if a physician should cause proclaim, that he will freely cure all the sick of such a place, that will employ him: in which case, it is plain, none will employ him, but such as are sensible of some malady they labour under; yet that sense of a malady is not the condition of their welcome to that physician; nor is it requisite for his curing them, but for their employing him.

Now, in calling you to embrace the covenant, ye are called indirectly, and by consequence, to this faith of the law, namely, to believe that ye are sinners in life, heart, and nature; lost and undone, under the curse; and utterly unable to recover yourselves. Yet it is not saving faith, nor doth it instate one in the covenant of grace; that is peculiar to another kind of believing: of which in the next place.

The faith of the gospel, instating in the covenant.

Saving faith, which unites to Christ, is the faith of the gospel. For the gospel only is the ministration of righteousness 2 Cor. iii. 9. It is in it that the righteousness, of faith is revealed unto faith, revealed to be believed on, Rom. i. 17. It is the alone word which gives sinners the notice of a Saviour, of the atoning blood, and the

new covenant in that blood; and therefore is the only word by which saving faith is begotten in the heart of a lost sinner. In the word of the gospel, the Lord and Saviour Christ, with all his benefits and covenant, is; and that to be believed on, as appears from Rom x. 6, 7, 8, 9. So that, the word of the gospel, being received by believing, we have Christ, and his covenant, with all the benefits thereof: saving faith being indeed the echo of the quickened soul, to the word of grace that bringeth salvation; a trusting of the word of the gospel, and the person, to wit, the Saviour, and the thing, therein held forth to us, to be believed on for salvation. Mark. i. 15, "Believe the gospel." Is. liii. 1, "Who hath believed our report?" Gal. iii. 2, "The hearing of faith." This is that believing, by which we are united to Christ, entered into the covenant of grace, and instated therein unto salvation. The which believing may be explained in four particulars; (1.) The faith of Christ's sufficiency; (2.) The faith of the gospel-offer; (3.) The faith of our right to Christ; and, (4.) The faith of particular trust for salvation. So putting the

QUESTION, What is that believing, by which I, a lost sinner, under the curse of the law, may unite with Jesus Christ, and so enter into, and be instated in the covenant of grace, to my eternal salvation? We ANSWER thereto directly in these four particulars, by way of direction in this momentous point, whereon salvation depends.

1. The faith of Christ's Sufficiency.

In the first place, you are to believe, that there is a fulness of salvation in Christ for poor sinners. This is the constant report of the gospel concerning him, Eph. iii. 8, "That I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." Heb. vii. 25, "He is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him." In the word of the gospel Christ is held forth as an able Saviour; able to save men from their sins, and from the wrath of God. His merit is a sufficient sconce against the tempest of fiery wrath, which incensed justice is ready to cause to fly forth against transgressors: Isa. xxxii. 2, "A man shall be a covert from the tempest." His Spirit is sufficient to sanctify the most unholy: 1 Cor. vi. 11, "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." The righteousness he fulfilled as the condition of the covenant, is so valuable in itself, and in the eyes of his Father, that it is sufficient to procure justification, sanctification, and all other saving benefits to sinners, who in themselves deserve death and damnation: so that they are happy who are in him; they shall never perish, but have everlasting life, being eternally secure under the

covert of his righteousness, as a sufficient defence. Believest thou this?

This is the general faith of the gospel, which being without particular application, doth not unite the sinner to Christ, nor enter him into the covenant; and may be found in reprobates and fallen angels, being only an assent in general to the truth of the doctrine of the gospel, Matth. xiii. 20, 31, and viii. 29. But by the nature of the thing, it is necessarily prerequisite to a faith of particular application: for I must first believe a saying to be true in itself, before I can trust to it for my part: I must first believe a thing to be good in itself, before I can believe that it is good for me.

But where the faith of the gospel is carried forward to uniting with Christ, the effect of this general faith is very valuable, as well as necessary. And that is, an high esteem of Christ and his covenant, an ardent desire of union and communion with him, a longing for his righteousness, as a hungry man longs for meat, or a thirsty man for drink. The man sees indeed, that he has no special interest in Christ and his righteousness; but he would fain have it: all is sapless to him without it; his soul within him cries, give me Christ, or else I die: and he is content to part with all for him, and to take him for all. This is taught us in the parables of the treasure hid in the field, and of the pearl of great price, the finding out of which moves to sell all, and to buy them, Matth. xiii. 44, 45, 46.

Howbeit this esteem and desire of Christ is different from that which follows upon the soul's union with Christ, when once faith hath taken possession of him and his benefits, and hath got a view of his intrinsic supereminent worth and value: the which is mentioned, 1 Pet. ii. 7; Psalm lxxiii. 25. The true spring of all this esteem and desire, is the principle of self-preservation, and the view of Christ as suited to that end. The merchant man is seeking goodly pearls for his own enriching; and seeing that the one pearl will answer that design, he is restless till he have it. The poor sinner is hotly pursued with the law's curse, which is still ringing death and damnation in his ears. In the mean time, he gets a distant view of the city of refuge; and therefore he makes forward to it with all speed: but what makes him run, but life, life, precious life, that he may not perish? Verily, he cannot be expected to act from a generous principle, before he is united to Christ: John xv. 5, "Without me ye can do nothing." But let him not fear: he is welcome to Christ, even coming to him from no higher principle. The truth is, the Lord Jesus, by his Spirit, sets the principle of self-preservation astir, being a thing in itself good; and useth it as a mean to hasten sinners unto him. This is evident from the complaint, John

v. 40, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Can one imagine our Lord will reject a sinner coming to him for life, when he complains that sinners will not come to him for that end?

II. The faith of the gospel-offer.

In the next place, you must believe, that Jesus Christ, with his righteousness, and all his salvation, is by himself offered to sinners, and to you in particular. This is the plain voice of the gospel to all unto whom it comes, Isa. lv. 1, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price." Rev. xxii. 17, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Prov. viii. 4, "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man." But alas! few believe it: yea, none will believe it to purpose till the Spirit of the Lord make it plain to them, and persuade them by an inward illumination. Many secure sinners hear the gospel, and are glad of the offer: but they discern not Christ's voice in it. They hear it not, as the word of the Lord Christ himself to them; but as the word of men: hence it hath no due authority upon their consciences; so they pass it over lightly. Thus were his offers of himself entertained, when made by his own mouth, but he not discerned as the eternal Son of God, and Saviour of the world. So, in the congregation of Nazareth, all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his month. But they said, is not this Joseph's son? Luke iv. 22. And in a little they rose up, and thrust him out of the city, ver. 29. Again, when the voice of Christ is discerned in the offer by the convinced sinner; then the sinner is ready to conclude, that it is to others, but not to him. Unbelief saith, but our bones are dried, and our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts, Ezek. xxxvii. 11. They cannot believe, that so good news from heaven concerns them, or that such a word is directed unto them. And thus men not believing God in the record given of his Son, that he is, with all his salvation, offered to them, do make him a liar, 1 John v. 10.

But where saving faith is a-working, the word of the gospel-offer is, by the Holy Spirit, applied to the soul in particular with power, as the word of the Lord himself, and not of men; whereby the man is assured, that it is the voice of Christ, and to him in particular: whereupon he applies it to himself by believing: 1 Thess. i. 5, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." Chap. ii. 13, "The word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as

the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." This is altogether necessary; insomuch that without it there can be no receiving of Christ, forasmuch as otherwise the soul can see no solid ground and foundation of faith, for it is evident there can be no receiving aright, where the sinner doth not believe the offer to be to him in particular. And here begins the application of faith, an application tending to union with Christ.

Wherefore, if you would unite with Christ, and so enter into the covenant of grace, sist yourselves before the Lord as condemned sinners, under the curse of his law; and hear and believe the word of his gospel, as directed to you condemned and cursed sinners in particular. So will it come unto you, as the rising sun, to one sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death; or as the offer of a pardon, to one under sentence of death. And let not your heart misgive you by unbelief; but firmly believe the offer to be made by Christ himself unto you, as it is in very deed, Isa. lv. 3, "Hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you."

But here it is necessary to remove the following objections.

Objection 1. But Christ is now in heaven, and I hear no voice from thence: how then can I believe that he himself is offering himself to me? Answer. Though Christ is in heaven, yet he is speaking from heaven to us; howbeit not by a voice sounding through the clouds, yet by a voice sounding in the gospel: Heb. xii. 25, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh—that speaketh from heaven." And not only is his voice in the word of the gospel, but he himself by his Spirit is in it, as the apostle teacheth, Rom. 6, 7, 8. Thence it is, that it is a quickening word to dead souls: John vi. 63, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." It is the lively seed, whereof the new creature is formed, 1 Pet. i. 23. Jesus Christ did once, by a voice sounding through the clouds, speak a word of conviction, Acts ix. 4, 5. But even in that case, the word of the offer of himself was remitted to the preaching of the gospel by a messenger thereto appointed, ver. 6. And the voice of Christ sounding in his written word, is more sure than a voice sounding through the clouds, 2 Pet. i. 18, 19. This voice in the word is the stated ground of faith, with which faith must close for salvation: Rom. i. 16, "The gospel of Christ: it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." Ver. 17, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith." And there is no true saving faith, where it is not received as the very voice of the Lord himself, 1 Thess. ii. 13.

Therefore you must receive the word of the gospel, as the word of Christ himself, as in very deed it is.

OBJECTION 2. But Christ in the word of the gospel doth not name me: how then can I believe that he offereth himself, his righteousness and salvation, to me in particular? ANSWER. Neither doth he name you in the word of the law, whether in the commands thereof, or in the curse thereof. How do you come to believe that you are a sinner? Is it not, that, the commands of the law being directed to all men, you conclude and believe, that, you being of the number of mankind, they are therefore directed to you in particular, as well as to others? And how come you to believe that you in particular are under the curse of the broken law? Is it not, that, since the law denounceth its curse against every one that, being under it, breaks it, Gal. iii. 10; Rom. iii. 19, you do conclude and believe, that it curseth you, forasmuch as you are one of these breakers thereof? Now, you have as sufficient ground to believe that the offer of the gospel is to you in particular; forasmuch as it is made to all, without exception, unto whom the gospel comes, Rev. xxii. 17; Isa. lv. 1. It is ordered to be made to every creature under heaven, Mark xvi. 15: and how sinful soever you are, you are one of these creatures. Christ's voice is unto men, sons of men: and be what you will, you are one of mankind-sinners: and therefore the offer is to you in particular, Prov. viii. 4. Accordingly, we are warranted to apply the general offer to every one in particular; and every one is warranted to apply it to himself: Acts xvi. 31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

OBJECTION 3. But alas! I fear I want the qualifications determinative of those to whom the gospel offer is particularly directed. I dread that I have not as yet got a due sense of sin: and our Lord says expressly, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," Matth. ix. 12, 13. The gospel-offer runs in these terms, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come," Isa. lv. 1, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden," Matth. xi. 28, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. But when I view my own condition, I very much fear I have not as yet reached that thirst after Christ, and that willingness to take him, which these texts speak of; and that I cannot be accounted one truly labouring and heavy laden: how then can I believe that Christ offers himself to me in particular? ANSWER. It is most certain truth, that, unless you have a due sense of sin, unless you thirst after Christ and his righteousness, unless you be heavy

laden with the felt burden of sin, and willing to take Christ on any terms, you will never take him by a true faith. Nevertheless, whatever qualifications you have, or have not; yet if you are a sinner of Adam's race, (and I hope you doubt not that), Christ is offered to you, together with his righteousness, and all his salvation, Prov. viii. 4; John iii. 16; Mark xvi. 15. For howbeit there are indeed certain qualifications necessary to move you to take Christ; yet there are none at all to hamper the gospel-offer: but Christ is really offered to you, be in what case you will; so really, that if you do not believe it, and thereupon receive an offered Saviour, you will be damned for not believing, Mark xvi. 16.

It is undeniable, the less that sinners are sensible of their sins, they are the farther from righteousness; they do the more need Christ, and are the more to be called to repentance. This is evident from the whole tenor of the holy Scripture, and from the very nature of the thing. And therefore it is sinners in the general, and not sensible sinners only, who are meant, Matth. ix. 12, 13. Even as it is sick people in general, comprehending even those of them who are so delirious, as to think nothing ails them, that need a physician; and not those sick only, who are sensible of their state and hazard. This is the plain literal sense of that passage, from which there is no necessity to depart: and the departing from it is attended with a manifest inconvenience.

Neither is the thirst mentioned, Isa. lv. 1, to be restricted to a gracious thirst, a thirst after Christ and his righteousness. For some at least of the thirsting ones, to whom the offer is there made, are "spending money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not," vers. 1, 2. But it is evident, that sinners duly sensible, who are thirsting after Christ and his righteousness, are not spending their money and labour at that rate; but, on the contrary, for that which alone is bread, and satisfieth, namely, Jesus Christ the true bread which came down from heaven. Wherefore the thirst there meant, must needs comprehend, yea, and principally aim at, that thirst after happiness and satisfaction, which being natural, is common to all mankind. Men pained with this thirst do naturally run, for quenching thereof, to the empty creation, and their fulsome lusts: and so they "spend money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not;" finding nothing there that can satisfy that their appetite or thirst. Now, to men in this wretched case is the gospel-offer of the waters of life made: Christ is offered to them, as bread, fatness, what is good, and will satisfy that their painful thirst, which otherwise will never be quenched, *ibid.*

And as little is the solemn gospel-offer, Matth. xi. 28, restricted to a certain set of men endowed with some laudable qualifications, going under the name of labouring, and being heavy laden; the which do indeed denote the restlessness natural to the sinful soul of man, spending its labour for that which satisfieth not, Isa. lv. 2. Our father Adam left his whole family with a conscience full of guilt, and a heart full of unsatisfied desires. Thus we naturally having a restless conscience, and a restless heart, the soul as naturally falls a labouring for rest to them. And it labours in the barren region of the fiery law, for a rest to the conscience; and in the empty creation, for a rest to the heart. But after all, the conscience is still heavy laden with guilt, whether it has any lively feeling thereof, or not; and the heart is still under a load of unsatisfied desires. So neither the one, nor the other, can find rest indeed. This is the natural case of all men. And to souls thus labouring and laden, Jesus Christ calls, that they may come to him, and he will give them rest; namely, a rest for their consciences, under the covert of his blood; and a rest to their hearts, in the enjoyment of God through him. To this interpretation we are led by the style of the Scripture, the phraseology of the Holy Ghost, both in the Old and New Testament; the which may be viewed in the following texts compared, to wit, Eccl. x. 15; Hab. ii. 13; Isa. lv. 2, and i. 3, 4; 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7.

Finally, as for the willingness which you are afraid you are defective in, surely, in all other cases, he that saith, Whosoever will, let him take such a thing, will, according to the common sense and understanding of such words amongst mankind, be reckoned to offer that thing unto all, and to exclude none from it; however it may bear an intimation, that it is not to be forced on any. Why then should this manner of speech, Rev. xxii. 17, be thought to limit the gospel-offer to a certain set of men?

Wherefore we conclude, that Christ lays no bar in the way of any of you: do not ye put bars in your own way, and then complain ye cannot get over them. For, according to the holy Scripture, it is infallible truth, that Christ is offered to you, and every one of you, in particular: believe it, else ye make God a liar, 1 John v. 10.

III. The faith of our right to Christ.

Furthermore, you must believe that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, and your Saviour in particular, by his Father's appointment, and his own offer: and that, by the same appointment and offer, his righteousness, the condition of the covenant, and eternal life, the promise of the covenant are yours; yours, I mean not, in

possession, but, in right thereto; so far as that you may lawfully and warrantably take possession of the same, and use them as your own to all intents and purposes of salvation, John iv. 42, "We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." 2 Sam. xxii. 3; and Luke i. 47, "my Saviour." Do not think this too much for you: it is no more than what is necessary to saving faith in Christ. If you believe only, in the general, that Christ is the Saviour of the world, but believe not that he is your Saviour in particular; what do you believe more than devils do? They believe him to be Jesus a Saviour, Mark i. 24. If you would go beyond them, you must believe he is your Saviour; and consequently, that his righteousness and salvation are yours, in the sense before opened: for where Christ is given, with him are freely given all things. And pray consider, how can ye take him or receive him as your Saviour, if he is not yours indeed? A man may fraudulently take possession of what he doth not believe to be his by right: but no man can fairly and honestly claim and take possession of what he doth not believe to be his own. Certainly, God must first give Christ us, before we can receive him: for "a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven," John iii. 27. Giving on God's part, and receiving on ours, here, are corelates: and the former is the foundation of the latter. Now, God's gift is sufficient to make a thing ours. Therefore believe firmly, that Christ is your Saviour in particular; that his righteousness is yours, and eternal life yours.

QUESTION. But how can I, a poor sinner, by nature under the curse, believe that Christ is my Saviour, that his righteousness, and eternal life, are mine? ANSWER. You may firmly believe it, because you have the word and testimony of the eternal God upon it, in his holy Gospel. What is the gospel, which the apostles were sent, in the name of God, to *testify*? The apostle John declares it, 1 John iv. 14, "We *testify*, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." Is not Jesus Christ then, by office, whatever he is in the event, Saviour of the world? and if he is so, and you are one of that world of mankind, is he not therefore your Saviour? Why then will ye not believe it? God set the sun in the heavens to be a light to the world: and do not you therefore judge, that you have a right to the light of that sun, as well as the rest of mankind; and accordingly use it freely, to work or read by it, as your own by God's free gift? Jesus Christ also is the light of the world, John viii. 12; given for a light to the Gentiles, Is. xlix. 6.: and faith appropriates him, saying, The Lord is my light, and my salvation, Psalm xxvii. 1. Now, you are a member of these societies, to wit,

the world, and the Gentiles: therefore he is your light, that is, given for a light to you. Will you take Christ's own word upon it? You have it John vi. 32, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." If your neighbour give you bread, you will reckon his gift thereof sufficient to make it yours; and so eat of it freely as your own. If your prince shall give you a house or land, which he hath an unquestionable right to dispose of, you would reckon them truly yours by his gift; and would freely go and dwell in that house. and possess that land, as your own. How is it then, that when the Father gives you his Christ, yet you will not believe that he is yours, nor take possession of him as your own? Why, the truth of the matter lies here: you believe your neighbour, you believe your prince; but you believe not your God, in his holy gospel, but make him a liar, not believing the record that God gave of his Son, 1 John v. 10. But, whether you will believe it or not, it is a truth, that Christ is your Saviour: and if you will not believe it now, to your salvation, you will undoubtedly see your mistake hereafter; when perishing, you will be convinced that you perish, not because you had not a Saviour, but because you neglected to make use of him.

In like manner, the righteousness of Christ is yours, namely, that which he fulfilled as the condition of the covenant. It is yours by Heaven's gift, being given you with himself: and therefore it is called the gift of righteousness, Rom. v. 17. It is a testamentary gift, made over to you in Christ's testament, wherein sinners of mankind, without exception, are the legatees, as hath been already cleared. Eternal life is another such gift or legacy: so it is yours too. And you have the record, testimony or witness, of God himself upon it, that it is given you, 1 John v. 11, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son." Is not God's own record a sufficient ground for believing? will you venture to disbelieve it on any pretence whatsoever? Here you have that record, namely, that God hath given to us eternal life. It may be you will imagine that it relates only to actual believers in Christ, or at most to the elect; and use that for a defence of your unbelief. But, I pray you, consider it is the ground and warrant for all to believe on Christ, and to lay hold on eternal life in him; being the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son, to be received by all to whom the gospel comes, ver. 9: but that God hath given eternal life to a certain select set of men, can never, in reason, be deemed to be a warrant for all men to believe. Moreover, the great sin of unbelief lies in not believing this record: but it doth not lie in not believing that God hath given eternal life to

actual believers, or to the elect; for the most desperate unbelievers believe that, insomuch that their belief of it adds to their torment; but it lies in their not believing, that to mankind sinners, and to themselves in particular, God hath given eternal life. This is what flies in the face of the gospel of God, which is the proclaimed deed of the gift and grant of Christ and all his benefits, to sinners of mankind, declaring the grant thereof to be made them, and calling them to take possession of the same as their own, Isa. ix. 6, "Unto us a child is born," (the word signifies presented born, as to his relations having a particular interest in him; as Machir's children were presented to Joseph, and laid on his knees, Gen. l. 23, and Ruth's son to Naomi, Ruth. iv. 17.), "unto us a son is given." John iii. 16, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." 1 Cor. i. 30. Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us (namely, by legal destination) wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

And thus you see you have an infallible ground for this act of faith, namely, the testimony of God that cannot lie. Wherefore, as ever you would be united to Christ, and so instated in the covenant, believe firmly that Christ is yours, and his righteousness yours, and eternal life in him yours.

This is a more close application of faith than the former, and ariseth from it; for thus one believeth the efficacy of the divine appointment, and of the gospel-offer. If God appoints Christ a Saviour to you, with his righteousness and eternal life, and Christ offers himself to you accordingly; surely the effect of that appointment and offer must be, that they are indeed yours, to be used by you, as your own, for your salvation. If you believe that appointment of the Father, and the Son's offer, you must needs believe this: for if they be real, and not ludicrous deeds, they certainly convey to you a right to Christ, his righteousness and salvation: so that, in virtue of them, these must be yours, to be warrantably claimed and used by you as your own, for the purposes of salvation. It is not doubted, but men's deeds of gift, and their offers, real and not ludicrous, do convey such a right to the parties in favour of whom they are made. If a friend of yours, having a sum of money lying in a neighbour's hand, should, especially by a deed in writing under his own hand, appoint and ordain that sum a gift to you, to relieve you out of a certain strait; you would make no question but you might go and claim it, and take it up: if, having the sum in his own hand, he should offer it to you, as a gift, you would make no question but you might take it to you; and, in both cases, use it as your own by

your friend's appointment or offer. And shall not the Father's ordinances and appointment, and Christ's offer, be as efficacious? Why then will you not believe this its efficacy? why will ye not believe, that Christ with his righteousness and eternal life are yours?

Truly, the believing hereof is the very next step to the soul's uniting with Christ: and therefore it is proposed to the sinner, as the nearest means to bring him close unto God in Christ, Hos. xiv. 1, "Return unto the Lord thy God," he is thy God, thou hast a right to him, return, come even to him, take possession of him as thine own God: Accordingly, the sinner coming unto him by faith, comes on this very ground, Jer. iii. 22, "Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God." Ver. 23, "Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." As Hagar's eyes were seasonably opened to see she had a well by her, when she had given up her son for dead; so when the sinner lies in his death's wounds from the law, in a work of conviction, the spirit of faith opens his eyes, by means of the glorious gospel, in a work of saving illumination, so that he sees he hath a Saviour, a righteousness, and salvation. And then he presently apprehends or grips the same as his own. Thus the prodigal first believed that he had yet a father, and a father's house, where there is enough and to spare; and then ariseth and goeth to him, Luke xv. 17, 18.

Objection 1. If it be true, that Christ is my Saviour, that his righteousness, and eternal life in him, are mine; then I may be easy, I will certainly be saved without any more ado. Answ. That is but a cavil, best suiting those who, being indifferent about Christ and salvation, think it not worth their pains seriously to consider such things. One truly impressed with the matter, and duly considering, being once brought to believe this, would rather say, "Then, since Christ is really my Saviour, his righteousness and eternal life mine; I will take him to me, I will receive and rest on him as my Saviour, I will rely on his righteousness, and look for eternal life in him: why should I be lost for ever, since I have a full Saviour? why should I go naked, since I have a complete righteousness made over to me by heaven's gift? why should I die, when I have eternal life in Christ?" Put the case, you did see a man at the point of starving for want of bread; and, out of kindness and pity to him, you should appoint and ordain meat for him, out of your own store, for preservation of his life; and withal should carry it to him, and set it before him, saying, Ha, there is meat I and my father have ordained for you, eat, and welcome. If that man should say, Oh! I may not take it, for it is not mine own; would you not tell him, that your gift, appointment, and offer of it to him, makes it his,

so that, with a good conscience, he may freely eat it as his own bread? But should he then reply, and say, Why then, if it is mine, without any more ado I am secured from starving; I need not at all be at pains to take and eat it; would you not reckon him either mad, or but jesting with you, not sensible of his hazard of starving? The application is obvious. It is not meat being one's own, so that he may use it freely as such, that will keep him from starving: he must take and eat it, and so use it as his own, if he would have that benefit by it. Even so it is not Christ being yours, with his righteousness and salvation, that will save you: you must take possession of him, and make use of him as your own, for salvation, if you would be actually saved by him. There is a wide difference betwixt a thing being ours in simple right thereto, and its being ours in possession. It is in the former way only that Christ is yours before uniting with him: and if you do not improve that, by receiving him, and taking possession, you will perish eternally for all it: Heb. iv. 1, "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Luke xvi. 12, "If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

OBJECTION 2. But Christ a Saviour, his perfect righteousness, and eternal life, are things so exceeding great and precious, and I am so very sinful and unworthy, that it is mighty hard for me to believe they are mine. ANSW. Yea, here indeed lies a great difficulty of believing; when once a sinner's eyes are opened, to see the transcendent excellency of Christ, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and his own utter unworthiness: a difficulty not to be surmounted, but by the effectual operation of the Spirit of faith, causing one to believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Eph. i. 19. But for your help consider they are yours by mere free gift; which is so far from requiring any work in the creature, that it excludes all respect thereto. Christ himself is the Father's gift to you, John iv. 10, and vi. 32. His righteousness is a gift too, Rom. v. 17. And so is eternal life in him, 1 John v. 11. Now, what is freer than a gift? And then, howbeit they are indeed a gift far beyond whatever you could have expected, yet they are not too great for an infinite God to give. In making this gift, he acted not according to the dignity of the party in whose favour it was made; but according to himself, his own greatness and majesty. Meanwhile, though the gift is quite above your dignity, yet it is no more than what your need required. If less could have answered your necessity, there is no ground to think, a crucified Christ, the Son of God, would have been prepared for you. If you do but suppose it, you mar that ex-

pression of matchless love, John iii. 16, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." Wherefore, argue with yourself in this manner: "The gift is indeed unspeakable, but no less can serve my need; if Christ be not mine, I must perish: since therefore God hath said it, that he hath given me Christ; and the gift is not above him to give, and no less can serve my turn; I must and will believe that he is mine, with his righteousness and salvation."

IV. The faith of particular trust for salvation.

Finally, You must wholly trust on him as your Saviour, and in his righteousness as made over to you; and that for his whole salvation to you in particular, upon the ground of God's faithfulness in his word. And this is that saving faith, or believing on Christ Jesus, by which a sinner is united to him, and personally entered within the covenant of grace unto salvation: Acts xvi. 31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Psalm ii. 12, "Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish:—blessed are all they that put their trust in him." And Psalm xxxvii. 40, "He shall save them, because they trust in him." Rom. xv. 12, "In him shall the Gentiles trust." Compare Isa. xi. 10; Rom. i. 17, "Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith;" or, "Therein is the righteousness of God by faith, revealed unto faith," to wit, to be believed or trusted on. See Philip. iii. 9: Gal. ii. 16, "We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified." Acts xv. 11, "We believe, that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved." 1 Thess. ii. 13, "Ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God." 1 Cor. ii. 5, "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." This, according to the scripture, is a sinner's receiving and resting upon Christ for salvation, as saving faith is defined in our Catechism: and this is indeed believing, and nothing but believing, according to the scriptural use of that word.

1. I say, this is the scriptural receiving and resting on Christ. It is the receiving of him in sense of the holy Scripture: John i. 12, "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name;" where the receiving of Christ is explained by believing on his name. God hath appointed Christ Saviour of the world, and your Saviour. You hear the same published in the gospel; and you accordingly believe that he is your Saviour by his Father's appointment, and his own

offer; hereupon you trust on him, and on him alone, for salvation, and all that you need for your salvation. Is not this a receiving of him for your part in the character of a Saviour, wherein his Father sent him forth to you? Is it not a taking of him to yourself, as offered to you? Our Lord complains of the Jews, John v. 43, that whereas he came in his Father's name, they received him not, to wit, in the character wherein he was sent, namely, as the Messias, the Saviour of the world, and their Saviour, trusting in him that he would save them. This plainly appears to be the meaning, if one compares herewith the words there immediately following: "If another shall come in his own name, him will ye receive:" *q. d.* Ye will believe him to be the Messias, and your Saviour, and trust on him accordingly, that he will save you; the which has been often verified in that unbelieving people. Moreover, this is resting on Christ in the scripture-sense of that manner of expression: Isa. xxvi. 3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." And indeed one cannot devise what way a person can rest on a word, or a soul or spirit can rest upon a person, but by trusting them, or trusting in or on them. It is said, 2 Chron xxxii. 8, "The people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah." What way can one imagine they did so, but by trusting them? Chap. xiv. 11, "Help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee." How could they do so, but by trusting on him for their help?

2. This is believing, in the scriptural use of that word, which, in our entry on the question under consideration, we established from the scripture itself. For it is a trusting of, or trusting in a person, namely, Jesus Christ, and God in him, the personal object of saving faith, Acts xvi. 31; a trusting in a thing, namely, the righteousness of Christ, the ultimate real object of faith, Rom. i. 17; and a trusting in a word, namely, the record and testimony of God, the word of the promise of the gospel, the proximate or nearest real object of faith, *ibid.*; and all this for the great purpose of salvation. And then it is nothing but such believing: for thus faith is not explained away into, but is a thing quite distinct from the nature of a work, as the scripture contradistinguisheth works to faith.

Wherefore we conclude, that this trust is that believing on Christ, by which the soul is united to him, and savingly instated in the covenant. And for opening of it, we shall take notice of these five things plainly imported in it.

1. This trust imports, not only a willingness, but a sincere and honest desire to be delivered from sin and wrath; a desire to be sanctified, as well as to be justified; to be delivered from the reign-

ing power, pollution, practice, and inbeing of sin, as well as from the guilt of it; according to that of the apostle, Rom. vii. 24, 25, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death; I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." For it is a trusting on Christ, not for the half of his salvation, to wit, salvation from wrath only, which is all the trust of many, being by no means desirous to part with sin; but for the whole of it, namely, salvation from wrath, and salvation from sin too, which is the principal part thereof, Matth. i. 21. Now, a man may indeed fear that from one, which he doth not desire: but no body trusts in one for what he desires not. Faith is a believing with the heart, Rom. x. 10. The whole salvation of Christ is the believer's choice; it is the end he desires to compass: and the trust of faith is exerted as the means to compass that end.

2. A renouncing of all confidence in all that is not Christ, or in Christ, as to the matter of salvation particularly. In this trust is overturned self-confidence, law-confidence, creature-confidence; and the soul builds on a quite new ground: Phil. iii. 3, "We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Jer. xvi. 19, "The Gentiles shall come unto thee, and shall say, surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit." For it is a trusting wholly on Christ and his righteousness, a trusting, or a believing with all the heart, Prov. iii. 5; Acts viii. 37. At this rate the believer is carried off from the works of the law, to the blood of Jesus, for his justification; and carried out of himself too, unto the Spirit of holiness in Christ, for his sanctification: being persuaded, that no doing nor suffering of his own, can procure him the pardon of, or atone for the least of his guilt; and that he is not able truly to mortify one lust, more so as to purge away the guilt of one sin, Matth. v. 3; Isa. xlv. 24.

3. A hearty approbation of the plan or device of salvation according to the covenant, manifested in the gospel, as suited to the divine perfections, and to the case of sinners, and their own in particular: 1 Cor. i. 23, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;" ver. 24, "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Without this, no man knowing what God is, what sin is, and what is the worth of his own soul, will ever venture his salvation upon it; but one's trusting his salvation and his righteousness, speaks him to be well pleased therewith, as what one may safely trust to, even in the sight of a holy God. And this is that rejoicing in Christ Jesus, which makes an illustrious mark in the believer's character, Phil. iii. 3.

Withal it bears three things. (1.) An eying of Christ in this

matter, as a crucified Saviour, who hath fulfilled all righteousness, according to the stated condition of the covenant, 1 Cor. ii. 2. It is not Christ in the eternal glory he had with his Father before the world was, that faith fixeth its view on, while the soul in this case stands trembling before a holy God; but Christ the Son of God made man, come in the flesh, being born holy, leading a life perfectly righteous, and at last dying on the cross, to satisfy the demands which the law had on poor sinners. It looks unto him lifted up on the cross, as those who were bitten by the serpents in the wilderness looked unto the brazen serpent lifted up on the pole, Isa. xlv. 22; Numb. xxi. 8; John iii. 14, 15. Therefore it is called faith in his blood, Rom. iii. 25, his righteousness, whereof the shedding of his blood was the completing part, being the spring of the believer's hope. (2.) A real persuasion of the sufficiency of Christ's righteousness to save sinners, and us in particular, from sin and wrath; to answer for us before a holy just God, in the eye of his holy law; and to procure for us eternal holiness and happiness. There is no saving faith without this: Christ's ability to save must be believed, and that with application to your own case in particular, Matth. ix. 28, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" And in order hereunto, faith eyes Christ's righteousness as the righteousness of God, and therefore of infinite value and efficacy, Phil. iii. 9; 1 John i. 7. The reason why the gospel, and no other doctrine whatsoever, is the power of God unto salvation of sinners, is, because therein is revealed the righteousness of God unto faith, Rom. i. 16, 17, and that is the only righteousness, suited at once to the divine perfections and our case. (3.) An acquiescing in that way of salvation, for ourselves in particular. The believer hath a cordial liking of it, for the way of his salvation, as perfectly safe, being the power of God, and the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. i. 24. His soul pronounceth them safe and happy, that are in it, he desires for his own part to be found in it; and is persuaded he would be saved if he were in it. Thus faith acted in the woman diseased with an issue of blood, Matth. ix. 21, "She said within herself, if I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." And thus it acteth in all believers, determining them to that way, and to that way alone, for their case in particular. And here unbelievers are always unsettled.

4. A betaking one's self unto Christ and his righteousness alone for salvation from sin and wrath. This is done by this trusting. For the sinner believing that Christ is his Saviour, and that his righteousness is made over to him by free gift; and withal, that this his Saviour, with his righteousness, is sufficient to save him from sin and wrath; doth accordingly trust on Christ and his righteousness

for his own salvation, and so betake himself thereto: even as a beggar once having, and withal believing himself to have riches and wealth made over to him by a friend, leaves off to beg, and for his maintenance trusts to that wealth allenarly; and thereupon betakes himself to it. It is true, that wealth being a corporal thing, to which there is a bodily motion, the betaking one's self thereto is not the same thing with the trusting to it; howbeit the former is a native consequent of the latter: but Christ and his righteousness, as revealed unto faith, being things purely spiritual, to which there is no bodily motion requisite, that we may betake ourselves to them; the trusting and betaking one's self thereto, are one and the same. So by this trust, the soul takes possession of Christ and his righteousness; and useth the same as its own, to the purpose of salvation. By it the sinner betakes himself as a condemned man, unto Jesus Christ as the propitiatory mercy-seat through his blood, affording safety to the guilty before a holy God: and by it the sinner betakes himself as a sick man, unto the same Jesus as the physician of souls having the fulness of the Spirit of sanctification in him, to be communicated. Accordingly faith is called a coming to Christ, John vi. 35; a fleeing for refuge, as one in hazard of his life by a pursuer, Heb. vi. 18; and is often expressed, as Psalm ii. 12, by a word which properly signifies, to retire as into a shadow, Judg. ix. 15, or as the chickens do under the wings of the hen, Ruth ii. 12, "The Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust;" properly to retire. Compare Matth. xxiii. 37, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!"

5. *Lastly*, This trust of faith imports an affiance, confidence, or trust on Christ and his righteousness, that he will save us from sin and wrath, according to his promise set before us in the gospel; "Whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Isa. xxv. 9, "We have waited for him, and he will save us." Heb. iii. 6, "Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence." Isa. l. 10, "Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." And that this trust of faith is thus particular, is evident also from the nature of the thing. For whosoever trusts in a person for any thing, hath a persuasion of the same degree of firmness with the trust, that that person will do that thing for him. And for a sure token of this, where the party trusted fails, the party trusting is ashamed and confounded; as being disappointed in that which he trusted he would do for him. Wherefore, since the trust of faith is never disappointed, the scripture doth therefore assure us, that he that believeth on him shall

not be confounded, 1 Pet. ii. 6. nor ashamed, Rom. x. 11. The which doth sufficiently intimate, that he that believeth on Jesus Christ for salvation, doth trust that he will save him: otherwise there could be no place for his being confounded or ashamed whatever should be the event of his trust. Accordingly the trust of faith doth, in proportion to the firmness thereof, establish and fix the heart, Psalm cxii. 7, "His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord:" and hereof we have a plain instance in Paul's case, 2 Tim. i. 12, "I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed," marg. or trusted. Agreeable hereunto, faith is called in effect a building on Christ, as upon a foundation that will bear our weight, Isa. xxviii. 16, with 1 Pet. ii. 6. It is called a leaning upon him, Cant. viii. 5; a staying on him, Isa. xxvi. 3; a resting or relying on him, 2 Chron. xiv. 11, and xvi. 8. as upon one that will bear us up; a looking unto him, Isa. xlv. 22, having our eyes upon him, 2 Chron. xx. 12, as one from whom we look for life and salvation; and finally, believing on him, 1 Pet. ii. 6, as one by whom we shall be saved, Acts xv. 11.

The sinner being shaken out of all confidence for life and salvation in other things, stays himself by faith on Jesus Christ and his righteousness; trusting on him, that he shall have life and salvation through his righteousness. It is true, indeed, this particular trust and confidence may be assaulted with many doubts and fears: but these are things that faith hath to conflict with, as its opposites; and the stronger that faith is, the less they prevail; the weaker it is, they prevail the more: Matt. xiv. 31, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" It is indeed of very different degrees in different persons, and in one and the same person at different times: but if you remove all trust and confidence in Christ for one's own salvation, from faith, the very nature and essence of it is destroyed. For at that rate, the sinner, whose confidence in the flesh for his salvation is razed, having no confidence for it in Christ neither, is left quite unsettled and wavering, like a wave of the sea, or a reed in the water: and where then is faith's building, leaning, staying, relying and resting the soul on Christ? James i. 6, "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed." Ver. 7, "For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord." But the believing sinner, finding his confidence in the flesh razed, doth, by believing, cast the anchor of his trust and confidence on Christ Jesus and his righteousness, confiding and trusting that he will save him. And however he may indeed waver in that matter; being tossed with doubts and fears about his salvation,

weakening the actings of that his confidence; and sometimes prevailing so far, as to cause an intermitting of the exercise thereof: yet, even in that case, under all that tossing, he doth not waver like a wave of the sea, that hath nothing to fix it; but only like a ship at anchor. His confidence is never quite rooted out, as to the habit thereof; but will again exert itself: and in that respect every believer, as a real "partaker of Christ, holds the beginning of his confidence stedfast unto the end," Heb. iii. 14. And this trust and confidence is what our reformers called assurance, and described faith by.

Objection 1. Since it is not true of all who hear the gospel, that they shall be saved; there cannot be, in the case of every one of them, a ground on which this particular trust may be warrantably founded. Answer. All and every one of them, notwithstanding that, have a solid ground for it, even for trusting on Christ and his righteousness for their own salvation in particular. And that is the record and testimony of God in his gospel, that "whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. The true sense of which, as appears from what is said, is, that whosoever shall have this trust and confidence in Christ, shall not be disappointed, but shall certainly be saved. Here then is the faithfulness of God in his word, for the foundation of this faith of particular trust: and true faith is always built on that foundation. It is certain indeed, that, in the event, many to whom the gospel comes will not be saved: but then, it is as certain, that those who will not be saved, will not believe neither; that is, they will not come up to this particular trust and confidence, we have described from the word, Isa. liii. 1, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Howbeit, at this rate they have a firm ground of particular confidence. If they will not believe for all this, their ruin is of themselves, they will perish without excuse: and their unbelief will be the great ground of their condemnation. Jesus Christ, with his righteousness and salvation, is so far made theirs, by the Father's appointment, and his own offer, that they may lawfully and warrantably trust on him as their Saviour, each one for his own salvation. If they will not believe it, or not trust on him accordingly; they do, by their unbelief and distrust, dishonour the Father and his Son, and most justly perish.

Objection 2. Many trust in Christ as their Saviour, with a particular confidence that he will save them; and yet are grossly ignorant, profane, or formal hypocrites; and therefore not true believers, nor united to Christ. Answer. The apostle speaking of faith unfeigned, 1 Tim. i. 5, doth suppose that there is a feigned faith.